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THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

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THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

Guest Editors' Foreword

DON KALB[*] AND FLORIN POENARU[**]

In retrospect there is no surprise whatsoever about the emergence of postmodernism as a popular *lebensgefühl*, public fashion, and philosophical interpunction of the "grand narratives of modernity" in the 1980s basically everywhere in the global North. *Les trentes glorieuses* of the western welfare states were now indisputably over - stagnation, unemployment and public indebtedness were marking the day - and its Soviet competitor, too, had lost its credibility and increasingly its very legitimacy – similar debts and not un-similar stagnation had destroyed its pretensions.

Commentators did not know what would come but sensed what was gone. The postmodern sensibility emerged as a classical instance of turning necessity into virtue: the modern teleological sense of destiny, of a spreading and deepening abstract individualist-cum-rationalist emancipation, expressed by the growth of cities and sponsored by national states, industrial technology and large-scale bureaucracy had given way to urban crises, cultural relativism, irony, equifinalism, *petits histoires*, and emergent claims for communal identities and a search for roots. While the working classes had already begun their intensifying trajectory of downsizing and disenfranchisement, postmodernism now emerged as an expression of the creeping self-doubt and melancholia of the modern national intelligentias as they sensed the coming of the end of a national industrial regime of accumulation of which they had been a prime historical product.

Chronotopes are a fascinating aspect of what Wallerstein (2004) would call "geoculture", the dominant frames and sensibilities at any one moment in time in the world system, the dominant temporal orientations of world time. Another global systems theorist, Jonathan Friedman (Friedman and Friedman 2008a+b), makes a crisp and clear claim about them: in periods of broadly lived economic expansion, driven by the genius and capacities of a given hegemon, such as the United States and the Soviet Union, forward looking modernist and individualist chronotopes are generated and popularly celebrated. In periods of decline, on the other hand, synchronic and retrospective chronotopes emerge that celebrate not what comes but what is, or radicalize further and then articulate a return to imaginary collective roots and foundations (see also Kalb and Halmai 2011 for a further analysis of neo-nationalism in Europe). Postmodernism was an instance of such transformation of dominant chronotopes among the urban upper bourgeoisies in the system; rising ethno-nationalism and the unpredicted global religious resurgence was the more profound expression of those who were less well situated to just enjoy the moment.

In retrospect we also know that the postmodern moment lasted not longer then let's say 1995. As a dominant sensibility of the intelligentsias it gave way around this time to globalism, one-worldism and neoliberal imperialism writ large (for an extended argument see a.o. Kalb 2005). Altogether, the globalist syndrome articulated a new popularly established

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sense of futurist destiny - one would almost be tempted to say a worldwide sense but that would be an overstatement – as new technologies and new spaces, driven by a massive financial expansion, produced new hopes and claims for "futurous" becoming. Sure, as any other hegemonic will on weak foundations globalism was soon disputed, first by the alterglobalist emergence and then, apparently, by Islamism, terrorism, "networks", and ethnic identities that refused to dissolve into assumed to be cohesive moral majorities. Nor did it ever seem to be capable of universally incorporating territories and classes, including significant chunks of postsocialist societies. Profoundly disputed and increasingly associated with panic and securitization, it finally went under in the ongoing crises that started in 2007, fuelling the arguments of those who saw nothing less then a full scale decline of the West, such as Friedman and Wallerstein. In hindsight, the late Giovanni Arrighi had been perfectly right: this was just a short belle-epoque (2000), soon fading into another installment of the *Untergang des Abendlandes*. The East European sequences within this world trajectory present themselves transparently as, respectively, "the end of socialism", "transitional recession", "successful transition", "EU accession" (for some) as the highpoint, followed by crisis.

Most sociologists and anthropologists work on micro and meso levels; they work, so to speak, "on local time". They also often work "in local time", reproducing the temporal knowledges that are locally prevalent ("transition" etc). But it would be useful for them to interrogate the particular ways in which their questions, data and units of analysis situate themselves in relation to these processes in world time, which profoundly help to structure local becomings and locally lived chronotopes. World time structures them by 1) actual global political economic processes that transform global as well as local social relations, practices, policies and state forms, in ways that are shaped by how local forms are inserted in global relationships; and they do so by 2) energizing particular imaginations, desires and interests; as well as by 3) suggesting frames for their public articulation and interpretation.

Sociologists, anthropologists and historians who are focused on the question of chronotopes would be well advised to study what we here call "the politics of memory". Instead of accepting locally prevalent chronotopes as just given or as homogeneous cultural phenomena, we assume that they are in fact the unstable outcome of a popular politics of memory that is a provisional product of local/global intersections. Various definable actors and experiences play a role, all the way down from global hegemonic trends to national state elites, cultural elites, their competitors, and locally situated classes that do talk do back, even though not necessarily very loudly or clearly (see Kalb and Halmai eds. 2011).

One of the recently much discussed issues, in particular, though not exclusively, in relation to Central and Eastern Europe, is the issue of nostalgia for socialism (see for example Todorova and Gille, eds. 2010; also Todorova, ed., 2010). Nostalgia is what we might call a pre-political chronotope that encapsulates desires for the past but tends to keep them (as yet) rather private, and emphasizes the inescapability of their pastness, fuelling a chronic melancholia. Significantly, in our eyes, these two recent and excellent edited collections tend to reflect processes in CEE until about 2006 (EU accession), as suggested by their literature references and the temporality of the research they report on. This is significant because the governing classes of transition in CEE and their public pundits adamantly rejected this national underbelly of socialist melancholia as a legitimate structure of feeling with an eye on the coming EU accession which they imagined would not tolerate any smell in the public air, however faint, of socialism.

After the 2006 accession, however, it seems that this private underside of the dominant "memory regime" (thanks to Natalia Buier and Mihai-Stelian Rusu for the concept) of transition, that projected a neoliberal European futurity in the region, has tended to transform into more open public contention around memory issues. Hungarian mobilizations for and against the Right are a good example of that, but they occur elsewhere as well, such as in Poland or Bulgaria. In Western Europe and the US, open "foundational movements" advocating a nationalist return to founding myths, such as the US "tea party" movement, the "True Finns", or the party around Wilders in the Netherlands, which has apart from its anti-immigrant overtones surprisingly socialist side-tones too, have emerged in close synchronicity with the developing Western crisis. Memories of socialism, the welfare state, prosperity, and the nation are in principle plastic and can be publicly articulated by a politics of the Right and the Left. The Right momentarily prevails, even though it is sometimes *strictu sensu* a national-socialist right.

The present section features various approaches and sites. A historical anthropological approach is employed by Florin Poenaru, focusing on cultural elites and governmental agencies in Romania. It shows how here the field of memory politics has been monopolized by a state-sanctioned liberal-conservatism that rejects any positive connotation about Romanian socialism. State elites around President Băsescu fight the transformation of post-socialist nostalgia into open political identities by declaring its past regime, homegrown as well as foreign, criminal and illegal. It also sharply circumscribes who can speak about socialism with an authentic voice in the public sphere and who shouldn't. However, reading Irina Tomescu-Dubrow's contribution, we can expect that in Romania as well as in Poland, springing from transparent though broadly conceptualized self-interest (Boudon rather then Adam Smith), large groups will have rather favorable memories about the socialist past. The historical anthropological methodology of Poenaru, entrenched at CEU and well equipped to analyze a situated case in time, is nicely complemented by Tomescu's use of Slomczynski's reworking for Poland of Olin Wright's quantitative and hypothesis-testing approach to class locations. The latter finds it difficult to deal with the actual and dynamic politics of memory, though, while Poenaru postpones his anthropological form of class analysis for a later publication.

Two articles make an urgent plea to expand the study of the politics of memory beyond the class issue. Saygun Gökariksel, also with a background in anthropology, studies, as Poenaru does, the use of the secret service archives, in this case in Poland. He argues persuasively that we need to expand our purview from an exclusivist focus on nations to include mobile actors such as the Turkish emigrant socialist in Poland that he encounters in the archives. The "forgotten" migrations within the socialist second world are part of the memory of socialism too and we shouldn't leave such people to what E.P. Thompson called "the condescension of posterity" (Thompson, 1963). Socialism was, like capitalism, a world system, and not just a national encasement (see Priestland 2009, for a magnificent recent world history of socialism). Alex Levant molds a new approach to practice, in this case the commodification of Soviet memorabilia, by consciously re-appropriating the "creative Marxism" of post-stalinist Russian Philosopher Ilyenkov. This is a conscious academic politics of memory on the part of Levant. Ilyenkov, active in the sixties and seventies, was indeed much less well known in the West then his 1920s forebear Valentin Voloshynov, who was read to great effect by British cultural Marxists such as Stuart Hall in the 1970s. It is welcome to hear about him. Levant's analysis of "soviet pins" contributes to

the earlier mentioned work on nostalgia: commodification of memorabilia instills by the fact of their commercial practice alone a sense of definite pastness that must instill a sense of nostalgia, as Ilyenkov would anticipate.

Finally, Rusu studies the history of history textbooks in Romania and argues that there is a certain "mnemonic order" that imposes a particular memory regime in any particular period. One rarely finds hypothesis testing in historical analysis, but Rusu does that and he compares three periods in Romanian history. The outcome in fact seems to force him to rethink his notion of "mnemonic order" as expecting too much Parsonian social structuralist integration. What he discovers is continuous contention and change, not just within the memory regimes of the pre-socialist liberal period but under state-socialism itself. The politics of memory, official, emergent, and insurgent, are a constant and not just something that happens during official regime change. Adding to Poenaru's thesis of a state backed memory regime in postsocialist Romania, he notes that even after 1989 the Romanian state finds it difficult to accept a certain "multivocality" in educational history books.

Our case studies of the politics of memory in Central and Eastern Europe reflect on processes that are in fact worldwide and, in their particular CEE instantiation, world-embedded. The ongoing crisis of Western capitalism inevitably forces retrospective and introspective temporal sensibilities on stage - of which both socialist and welfare-statist national pasts provide some part of the material imagination - that will fuel a politics of memory and a politics of futurity that are in fact two faces of the same.

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A MINOR STORY, THE GLOBAL HISTORY: BEING "LOYAL TO THE STRANGERS" OF THE POLISH COMMUNIST SECRET SERVICE ARCHIVES

SAYGUN GÖKARIKSEL[*]

ABSTRACT. Recent years have witnessed contentious public debates in Poland, as in other Eastern European countries, concerning the public uses of the Communist Secret Service files and the ensuing politics of history and memory of the state socialist past. The key terms of these debates are articulated mainly by the liberal and conservative elites, within an abstractly conceived national history/memory framework that does not address the conflicts across class lines, or recognize the "estranged" of the new Poland, who remember the recent past "positively." Departing from the national history/memory framework, this paper calls for another kind of history: one that is minor as it is global. Drawing on a file compiled by the Polish Communist Secret Service on a certain self-identified socialist from Turkey, who migrated to Poland in the late 1980s, I attempt to provide a parallel history to the fall of the Berlin Wall. I read the file not only for what we can gather from it, but also for what we cannot know from what is positively presented by it. Concentrating on the fragmented, minor, inconclusive story of this politically engaged working man, I call for the use of Communist Secret Service archives to produce a global history of socialisms and of the Cold War that traces the lives and movements across the Second and Third Worlds. In so doing, I gesture to what Karol Modzelewski has suggested in a different but related context as "loyalty to the strangers/the unknown ones" (*lojalność wobec nieznajomych*).

Keywords: Global history of socialisms, Communist Secret Service archives, memory, life story, the Third World

Introduction[1]

The last two decades have witnessed a great deal of memory-work and historical production. In the midst of the global memory-boom we have rediscovered, as it were, how to remember, realizing the importance of remembering in order "not

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to repeat the same mistakes." To be sure, human history is not short of different forms and magnitudes of violence and suffering (see e.g., Mazower, 1998; Snyder, 2010). But we have also discovered that this great work of remembering and the accompanying memory industry (private or state-run) has displaced and silenced other kinds of memory and experience of the past. Hegemonic memory projects have led to a forgetting of certain kinds of memory, which do not seem to fit well into the present-day concerns. These "untimely memories" are considered to be the relics of the long bygone era when they in fact refer to the lived experiences of the recent past. This paper is about these untimely memories and the subaltern historical experiences of the state socialist past, which form a critical discourse on the main currents of post-89 national historiography and on the present-day living conditions of the new Poland.

There is hardly anything novel in the fact that we do remember things selectively just as we write histories selectively by singling out certain facts, events, and stories at the expense of other alternatives. What is more important is the ways in which practices of memory and production of history are inscribed into relations of power that shape and authorize the field of what can be recognized, said, and heard about the past (see e.g., Trouillot, 1995). It is in this field that one strategizes with the past and sharpens one's memories. Much of what we remember, want to remember, or have to remember requires a certain memory-work, which sometimes demands a considerable self-reinvention that exceeds one's capacity. This is what happens, for instance, in Calin Peter Netzer's (2009) recent film, when a 75-year old, retired Romanian man, Ion, accidentally receives a medal of honor from the postsocialist state for his heroic actions in the Second World War. Ion wants to take all his life chances to refashion himself in the image of that hero, whom the new state and the new national historiography demand. Consequently, he gains official recognition, which helps him improve his social relationships. Later, though, it becomes clear that it was *only* an accident and he has to return the medal. How is it possible for him to return it, now that he *is* the hero, having collected and invented all the proof to convince himself and others that he is the true recipient? Such accidents in state bureaucracy may happen, but can he, as the new hero, *afford* to be an accident?

This paper is about accidents of different sorts. By now, accidental meetings with unexpected files at the Communist secret service archives should have produced their own genre. Mine concerns a file compiled by the Polish Communist Secret Service (UB/SB) on a certain self-identified socialist from Turkey, Ali, who migrated to Poland in the late 1980s. There is much public contention today in Poland, as in other Eastern European countries, about the truthfulness and compositeness/falsity of the informational content of the files. In this paper, I want to follow a different line of inquiry, another methodology. I read the file not only for what we can gather from it but also for what we *cannot* know from what

is positively presented by it. The unknown of the file deserves to be engaged (inasmuch as what is known), in order for an ethical reading that does justice to the life of the subject, whom we meet accidentally.

Second, departing from the national history/memory framework, this paper calls for another kind of history: one that is minor as it is global. I do not claim to offer a fully developed life story of Ali. This is impossible if we stick only to his file. I do not claim to construct the "full picture" of his life or intend to pass an "eternal" judgment on him, as some historians engaged in the files today do. His file provides only fragments of what seems to be his life story, pieces of information, clues, which could be trailed further. What I suggest is a *beginning*, the beginning of many such stories that could be found in the Communist secret service archives in Eastern Europe. Moreover, Ali's story is a minor one, certainly in relation to the great historical event of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but one that demands a global reckoning. It points to the experiences of many other internationals (e.g., exiles, immigrants, students, militants, workers), who have lived and traveled between the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War. The history of these experiences and movements, unlike the one between the West and the East, has been largely unknown. That global history would do much to complicate and challenge the common assumptions about the (im)mobility considered to define the lives behind the Iron Curtain. It would do much by illuminating the social lives of different socialist alliances and exchanges that have spanned across the globe, often bypassing the western capitalist world. That history would also enable the non-nationals, the "strangers" of Eastern Europe to *reclaim* the memory of the East Bloc state socialist experience in a way that is not acknowledged by the national history framework. What could these strangers (like Ali) tell us about the memory of the state socialist experience of Eastern Europe? How would their memories and historical experiences contribute to today's assessment of the East Bloc state socialist experiment? Or putting these questions aside, will we keep on ignoring the lives of these strangers and treat their existence (now in the peculiar form of the file) *only* as an accident that does not require any reflection?

In this paper, I want to suggest a form of solidarity between the Third World internationals, the strangers of the East Bloc and the disenfranchised, the estranged of the new Poland (and Eastern Europe), who cherish "positive" memories of the state socialist past in spite of the immense political discrediting of the former regime. After a discussion of Ali's file, I provide a brief sociological overview of the conflict-ridden terrain of memory of the recent past in Poland. I underscore the critical force of the popular positive memories of the "People's Republic of Poland" (PRL) period that are largely shared by the working people, unemployed, and recent retirees, who have been disenfranchised by the political-economic transformations from state socialism. They have been silenced and

"estranged" by the post-89 liberal political elite, who as Karol Modzelewski (1993: 3) argues forcefully, have *forgotten* them – with whom they once fought under the banner of "Solidarity" – after occupying government positions. To counteract this abandonment and forgetting, Modzelewski coins the term "loyalty to the strangers/the unknown ones" (*lojalność wobec nieznajomych*), on which I draw in this paper. I extend the meaning of that term so as to include another group of strangers, that is, the Third World internationals of the Eastern Bloc, whose memories and historical experiences have still found no place or dignity, at least not in the main currents of post-89 Polish national historiographies.

The Unknown of the Fall

It was on 9 November 1989, the day the East and West Berliners famously celebrated the fall of the Wall, when the Polish counter-intelligence officer finally managed to reach Ali. Lately, he had not been found at his official home address and his Polish wife appeared to be at a loss about his whereabouts. Soon after this inspection at his house, the border security reported to the counter-intelligence officer (SB) that Ali had recently applied for a permission to travel to Vienna. The SB officer arranged a meeting with him and he was reported to be willing to do it. He only asked that their conversational language would be German since his Polish was much worse. During the meeting, after an initial curiosity about the purpose of the meeting, Ali narrated briefly his life story that eventually brought him to Poland, just as he did many times during his previous contacts with other Polish state authorities. The SB officer reports:

> He came to Poland after marrying a Polish woman, who wanted to return to her native country. She made him apply for permanent residency in Poland. He also underlined that he is a socialist (*socjalista*) and the kind of social system (*ustrój społeczny*) prevailing in Poland matches his political conviction unlike the ones in Bulgaria, Romania, or Yugoslavia. He admitted that he would not live in Bulgaria, where citizens of Turkish descent were not welcome; it was not even allowed there to use Turkish names. He called the Romanians "bandits", alleging that once he was robbed in Romania. (AIPN/Kr/036/495, k. 78-79)

Nor did he appear to have a positive view of the small Polish town he was supposed to reside. His brother in law, who was, perhaps, on too good terms with alcohol, Ali complained, constantly made him drink. Furthermore, he was by training a teacher, but had not been able to find a fitting job for himself in Poland. He had a plan, however. He wanted to export "key making machines" (*maszyn do robienia kluczy*) from Poland to Turkey where it was sold twice as expensive. Ali was still well off. He had a car and bought a house in Poland (registered under his wife's name) in the final stages of construction.

The report on the meeting concludes with remarks that reveal the SB officer's precautions, suspicions (perhaps, typical of the genre of these reports) and ambivalent views on Ali:

> The interlocutor was willing to meet me and came to the meeting punctually. He was not at all upset or surprised by the fact that he met a counter-intelligence officer. He willingly agreed to meet me after coming back from Vienna....The interlocutor possessed permanent residence card since 1988 but until now he had not taken care of the legal issues related to that; he did not get a regular job (*praca zaróbkowa*), too frequently visited Austria and Turkey, and did not stay at his wife's place when he was in Poland….He said that next time he would prefer to meet in a less official atmosphere. He underlined that he was politically repressed in Turkey for his views. Our aim should be to establish an "operational dialogue" with him, but entertaining the possibility that he may be a bidder (*oferent*)… (AIPN/Kr/036/495, k. 79-80)[2]

There is no conclusion to Ali's case. The next meeting does not seem to have ever taken place. There is no other meeting report in the file compiled on Ali, who was registered by the SB at the time as a "candidate" for collaboration. It may be that Ali never came back to Poland, in any case to the *same* Poland, or he was never again contacted by the SB. It may be that as the SB ceased to exist in April 1990 – at least its name changed, Ali was dismissed from the agent network. There may have been more urgent issues to concentrate on for the reformed secret service of the new Poland. Moreover, there is no single mention in Ali's 80 pages file of the unfolding "fall" of state socialism or of the fact that Tadeusz Mazowiecki was already in office, known as "the first non-Communist government" of postwar Poland. Perhaps, this is because the signs of the fall were not yet articulated even if they were visible and tangible. There was, perhaps, the shared sense of eternity and immortality of the regime (in spite of all the signs of decay), which made the course of the fall so unforeseeable for everyone, until it came to be registered as an inerasable global historical fact. It was only "after the fact" that the fall, as it were, was refashioned to be the unavoidable and predestined historical event, gesturing to the "end of history."[3] At any rate, in relation to this great historical event, Ali's story, to the extent it is captured in the file, appears as an inconclusive *minor* history of a certain self-identified socialist from Turkey, a parallel history to that of the fall. Ali might have disappeared (from history) after the fall, but the walls, both material and symbolic, between the East and the West have remained.[4]

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[2] The SB officer remarks that Ali could be a bidder because of his suspicious course of behavior in Poland (as is mentioned above).

[3] See also Alexei Yurchak's (2005) insightful work on the paradoxical experience of the collapse of Soviet socialism by the socialist citizens: the collapse seemed to them both unexpected and unsurprising. Yurchak argues that this, in fact, reveals crucial aspects of the lives lived in the late Soviet times by the socialist citizens.

[4] See, for instance, the interesting ethnography of Daphne Berdahl (1999) conducted around the fall of state socialism in East Germany. One may also point to the similar inequalities and asymmetries concerning the political-economic and cultural relationships in a larger scale between the East and the West in the so-called new Europe.

Ali and Others

The file, however, has more to say than this brief encounter that took place on 9 November 1989. Since Ali came to Poland, his neighbors, friends, wife's family, they all had become objects of various SB inquiries. As is often the case for foreigners residing in "People's Poland," Ali's circle of acquaintances had drawn the attention of the SB, ever so curious about every aspect of foreign lives – the lives of the strangers and the citizens around them. In addition to information about these people, the file sheds some light on different aspects of Ali's life story even if this light may be at times dim, partial, or only blinking. It is not possible to know what the SB exactly did with the story. Nor is it possible to know what Ali exactly did in Poland. The unexpected reader of the file finds only the following dry and sometimes, tragic facts of Ali's life recorded and reproduced by the SB.[5]

Born into a working class family that deeply identifies with the socialist tradition, he was politically engaged well into his mid 20s in different cities and provinces of the southeast Turkey, which witnessed increasingly violent political struggles between factions of the left and right wing groups in the late 1970s. He was subjected to what he called the "terror of the fascist government" for taking part in student protests at his university. He was persecuted and imprisoned for half a year. After he had come out he left for West Germany, realizing that he had no future in Turkey, which at the time hosted much political violence and ultra-nationalist bloody assaults on the leftist and Alevi groups, whom they called "Communists" and "Soviet agents."[6] In West Germany where he had relatives making a living as "guest workers," he managed to find employment in a firm as a gantry crane operator (*suwnicowy*). In the mid 1980s Ali came back to Turkey to take care of his sick mother. Meanwhile, he graduated and married a Polish woman, who already had been living in Turkey for a few years. He then was called in to perform his mandatory military service. He got involved in NATO forces. American soldiers trained him in the fields of communication and radiolocation (*radiolokacja*) and taught him how to use radars and locate objects by using radio wave technology. He spent the great portion of his military service years in NATO airbases in İzmir and Diyarbakır, taking part in the Warsaw Pact related tasks and observing the territories of Greece, Bulgaria, Iraq, Iran, and Kuwait. This part of his story has

[5] The following paragraph on Ali's biography draws on the file, AIPN/Kr/036/495, k. 30-31. Note that as is usual the case in many other secret service files, this one also includes the reproduction and circulation of the same information content in different reports that make up the great portion of the 80 pages file.

[6] There is, for instance, the notorious "Maraş Massacre" (*Maraş Katliamı*) executed by ultranationalist groups in December 1978 against the Alevi and leftist groups, who were accused of being Communists and Soviet agents. Thousands were killed by the ultranationalist paramilitary organizations and "civilians" while the state security forces watched and waited for the official directives to intervene. In the file there is no mention of this massacre. Living close to that area at the time, however, he could not have ignored this well-known tragic massacre.

drawn the most attention of the Polish counter-intelligence. This is unsurprisingly so, considering that the technique of interviewing and, where possible, extracting strategic information have been routinely employed by all state officers (in the West and the East) before admitting political refugees or immigrants into their countries.[7] According to the report, Ali did not provide much of strategic information (other than coining a few cryptonyms that NATO forces used), reminding the SB officers of his obligation to keep the information confidential and the uncomfortable setting in which the meeting with the SB was taking place. At the time, Ali hoped to engage in "private economic activity" in the gastronomy sector, as the SB officer put it, by opening a restaurant in Poland. It was June 1988.

Who is, one wonders, the addressee of this strange, foreign voice today, which emerges in fragments from the Polish Communist Secret Service archive? How is it possible to recognize Ali's story? What is *there* in any ways? Some clues about the experience of a working man on the move between the East and the West in order to get by, live a life? Some traces of a petty bidder who self-fashions as a victimized socialist and shows off with his NATO related knowledge in order to get the relevant official permissions in Poland? Some adventures of a self-identified socialist, who never became a member of or got recognition from any (Turkish or international) socialist or communist parties or organizations, which could now claim his life story?[8] Would the official post-89 Polish national historiography be interested in this story any more than the official Turkish national historiography, which has been silencing and obliterating any material traces of political oppression and state terror inflicted on the rebels and suspects such as leftists, Kurdish groups, and the so-called "religious minorities"?

Foreign to the national history framework, the minor story of Ali is both singular and collective. It is global. His story is certainly far from being singular in the political persecution he faced in the late 70s in Turkey or in his work life in West Germany; yet, this experience when combined with what he went through in

[7] For instance, many postwar refugees from the Eastern Europe, who stayed in the West Europe and emigrated to the U.S. were interviewed by Western military officers in the 1950s for strategic reasons. See the introduction of Raymond Bauer and Alex Inkeles (1968: 3-40) to the well-known *Harvard Refugee Project* of the late 1950s.

[8] There are certainly important archival/research institutions that focus on labor and working class history and socialist movements both in Turkey and abroad. But it seems dubious who would collect his story. For instance, TÜSTAV (Turkish Social History Research Foundation, Istanbul), which cooperates with the International Social History Institute (Amsterdam), has been one of the most important and productive institutions that collect and publish documents (life histories, memoirs, journals, primary archival material from the East Bloc archives), concerning those who took part in labor movements and the socialist/communist parties in Turkey. I have donated to TÜSTAV much of what I found during my field research at different Polish state archives (including those about the renowned communist poet Nazım Hikmet and other members of the Turkish Communist Party, many of whom died in exile in different East Bloc countries). Currently, with Erden Akbulut (from TÜSTAV) I am working on the life story of Münevver Andaç, which is largely overshadowed by that of Nazım Hikmet.

Poland may have the appearance of singularity. He is not, however, alone in any of these episodes. There are many other refugees, immigrants, socialists, communists, workers, students, all from the Third World, who came to the East Bloc countries for various reasons: education, political exile, political training, party work, make a living, adventure, or because they believed that that was the place to be in the future. The archives are full of documents and objects of different sorts that witness to the anger, frustration, fear, hope, and desires of these internationals. In this sense, Ali's story is collective while being singular. It calls for a global history of socialisms and of the Cold War that traces the movements and lives across the Second and Third Worlds. It is that history which would help us reflect on the experience of the Twentieth Century state socialisms from an ethnographically informed, global point of view, and challenge the entrenched Cold War assumptions about the "isolated" life of the East Bloc. It is that history which would render a face to many of the internationals, who are today called faceless terrorists**.**

Whose Memory, Which History?

Recently, the theme of "foreigners" has started attracting more attention of the Polish historical scholarship on the state socialist past.[9] The subject group is called foreigners because they are not Polish nationals. These foreigners include mostly students, political activists, militants and guerillas from the Third World. Their stories, however, are often absorbed into the post-89 nationalist historiography, which tends to use these stories to document once again how the Communist secret service plotted against the well-being of the Polish nation, even at the world scale by striking a pact with the devil. The "People's Republic of Poland" (PRL) is not only characterized by different forms of terror it inflicted on the Polish nation; it is also considered responsible for hosting and training "terrorists", providing assistance, for instance, to the militants of the "Palestinian Liberation Organization" or of other Third World national liberation movements. It is Communism, they say, that is responsible for today's terrorism, which threatens world peace. This is the way anti-Communist conservative populism today seeks to befriend once again the U.S. Republicans by fighting against the common enemy.

How to remember the PRL period and what to do with the UB/SB archives have been creating contentions in Poland. They have generated much public debate on "amnesia", "nostalgia", and "lustration," especially by the mid-2000s when the populist conservative "Law and Justice" (PiS) party won the national elections.

[9] See, for instance, the recent popular history book of Gadowski and Wojciechowski (2010), where they discuss how the East Bloc countries (e.g., Romania, Hungary, East Germany and Poland) got involved in training renowned "terrorists" like Carlos the Jackal and provided aid and weapon to many militants during the Cold War.

These debates are often subsumed into an abstractly conceived national history/memory framework, which does not differentiate between the historical experiences and memories of the PRL period across class lines. When they do recognize conflicts in memory, this turns into a battle between the liberal and conservative elites in order to justify their post-89 identities and political positions.[10] In spite of the nationalism that strongly identifies with anti-Communism and Catholicism (Stobiecki, 2007), different public polls (from the 2000s) have pointed to the curious fact that the PRL has still been viewed "positively" by more than one third of the Polish citizens (Kwiatkowski, 2008).[11] Considering that transformations from state socialism have drastically disenfranchised a huge segment of population and left many unemployed and estranged, the positive views on the PRL have unsurprisingly been concerned with full employment, education rights, health security and social security promised by state socialism. While those who are young (with no personal experience of the PRL period), with higher education, of higher social status and income (including managers, office workers and private entrepreneurs), in brief, those, who aspire to be the new middle class, tend to evaluate the period of PRL negatively by associating it with long queues, economic shortages, and lack of democratic rights (e.g., freedom of speech, censorship, free elections), the poorer working people, less educated, older, and retired people tend to view the conditions of life during the PRL period in more positive terms.

This clearly suggests that it is not some obdurate "past mentality" or the hidden *Homo sovieticus* within some "unreformable" Polish people that accounts for these positive views, as is commonly suggested in public debates. Nor is it simply due to the "weak memory" of the older generations, their sentimental longings for their youthful years, or the failure of public education that could not inculcate well

[10] One of the most controversial issues that express the political struggle between the liberal and conservative parties has been lustration, the screening process that disqualifies the public employees, who do not "admit" in their declarations that they have collaborated with the Communist secret service(s). This process, as Don Kalb (2009) argues, is directed mainly against the liberal elite (and the "compromised nature of roundtable negotiations" of 1989), who are mainly called by conservative parties as ex-Communists. It is important to underline that lustration also produces a certain narrative of the past, which rests on a condemnation of all that is associated with the state socialist past and in general, socialist ideology. This does not, however, exclude the fact that some of those, who support populist pro-lustration parties, cherish positive views about the state socialist past. According to Kwiatkowski (2008: 327), this points to the inconsistency and general ambiguity of what is understood by the right and the left in post-89 Poland.

[11] My account of the public polls concerning the PRL draws on Piotr T. Kwiatkowski's (2008) sociological study of collective memory in Poland, which provides statistical data on the topic based on the polls conducted by different research foundations (i.e., ISP/Pentor 2003, TVP/TNS OBOP 2004, and Pentor 2006). Note that even in 2006 when there was a considerable public discrediting and condemnation of the PRL by the conservative PiS-led coalition through different de-communization policies (destroying old monuments, changing former street names and curricula by crossing out certain authors, proposing a stronger lustration law), 40% of the respondents still expressed positive views on the PRL (ibid: 319).

the new generation with the negative sentiments about the recent past.[12] If today the young associate the PRL mainly with crimes and "lacks" of every kind, this indeed points to the great success of the anti-Communist patriotic education. Instead, I argue that the popular positive memories of the PRL period express a powerful critique of the present-day circumstances and less a glorification of the state socialist past in and of itself. These memories provide a language through which some of the disenfranchised groups today underscore the glaring social inequalities and the failed hopes that mark the transformations – the political-economic processes, which have taken from the working people both their past and future, leaving them in the eternal present, while these processes have created their own benefactors and ultimately, the new middle class, however unstable and insecure it is, concerning its future (Kurczewski, 2004).

Similarly, issues of what to do with the UB/SB archives have also been constitutive of and constituted by the political battles between mainly two dominant forces: elitist secular liberals and populist Catholic conservatives. (Kalb, 2009; Ost, 2005)[13] In spite of remarkable differences in regards to their particular political programs (e.g., the role of the state in free market economy, social rights, the public role of the Roman Catholic Church, abortion), they both agree on the necessity of undoing whatever the former regime represents in order to build a new nation-state. However, they diverge considerably about how to (un)do it. While the liberals argue for the necessity to draw a "thick line" between the past and the present to redeem the future from the past, the conservatives advocate for a "historical politics" that would form a national memory based on Communist violence and a heroic nationalist resistance against it. While the liberals envision a dark, doomed totalitarian past, with which everyone (in different degrees) is complicit, the rightwing advocate for a new, morally pure, Catholic Fourth Republic, which would be free of the compromised liberals of the "Round Table Negotiations" of 1989 and those who worked for the former regime (especially, the former collaborators of the UB/SB), whose conspiracies, they say, are the main reasons for today's socioeconomic problems. Along the same line, the liberal elites underline

[12] See the Polish historian Marcin Kula's works (e.g., 2006) for an insightful discussion of memory and contemporary history writing in Poland and Eastern Europe.

[13] See and compare Don Kalb (2009) and David Ost (2005) for an insightful discussion on the post-89 history of political divisions and identifications and the rise of right-wing populism in the face of elitist liberal rule, which led the shock therapy measures that systematically dispossessed the working class. While both Kalb and Ost suggest a critique of the elitist liberal rule and provide an account for the rise of right-wing populism among the marginalized populations, they also differ considerably. Ost points to the power of rightwing elite discourse to manipulate and channel the anger of the marginalized, where Kalb explores the local histories of the transformations outside the elite groups, and underlines how forces of neoliberal globalization and the global legitimacy crisis of the liberal ideologies of nation-state building play out in specific historical experiences of the working people in ways that make them identify with the populist conservative politics as an alternative to liberal cosmopolitanism.

the compositeness and falsity of information documented by the UB/SB files, where the right wing populists read these files as the ultimate source of truth, the *real* truth in the service of policing the past and catching criminals. When the most radical of liberals campaign for burning the archives, the far right calls for "defending" them at all cost and supervising as strictly as possible the public access to the archives.

Certainly, the information collected by the UB/SB and registered in the files are partial in the sense that they are collected for specific purpose and with specific reader in mind. The files are composed according to specific conventions and from the perspective of state authorities. True, different tactics of conspiracy, disclosure, manipulation or sometimes "disinformation" are inscribed into these documents. This cannot, however, make the entire files or information gathered there simply a pile of lies and deceptions to be disposed, just as it does not make them the ultimate source of historical truth. The partiality of files does not make them worthless (every document, archive has a specific interest) just as it does not make them the indisputable, absolute truth. Both liberals and conservatives assume that the content of the file has the power to determine "objectively" one's essential moral character, and indeed, the course of one's life - hence, the centrality of the debate on the truthfulness or falsity of the information documented in the files. I doubt that any security file would ever enjoy the authority to define what one's life is about if there was not a general, hegemonic political consensus (between the liberals and conservatives) on the necessity to undo (the "legacy" of) state socialism, blacken the memories of the recent past (except the marketable funny/ironic ones), and demonize and forget all those who today (have to) remember positively the recent past. I don't think any file in and of itself could claim to reveal one's sincerity or truthfulness. We would not know about it by reading a few passages from a file. We cannot know how sincere Ali was in the meetings with the security officers. We cannot know how genuine his suffering was or what he was really up to in Poland of the late 1980s. There is so much we cannot know from the files, but there is certainly a lot to trail and think through.

What the Communist secret service files provide is a valuable historical source to explore how the socialist state perceived and registered the world, how it functioned in relation to what it took to be the case, and how socialist citizens and strangers like Ali strategized in relation to that state. The files could shed some fresh light on the conditions and practices of daily life in state socialism. They could help unravel aspects of what it is that today's forgotten and estranged citizens want to remember as a critique of the present. The files also entertain a global possibility. They illuminate how socialism has been invested with desires, hopes, sufferings, and angers across time and space, not only through the stories of the Eastern Europe natives or the shining stories of the iconic socialists, but

also with the stories of minor, seemingly inconclusive lives of ordinary, unknown ones, who are neither "pitiful victims" nor "model heroes." This calls for solidarity with the ordinary strangers in Eastern Europe and beyond, past and present.

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"TISMĂNEANU REPORT" AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY. HISTORY WRITING AT THE END OF (SOVIET) MODERNITY

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ABSTRACT. This paper argues that the Tismăneanu Report is a form of auto-poesis given the central role biography and biographical trajectory play in its making and in its narrative form. This biographical centrality is analyzed against the background of a wider transformation at the end of the (Soviet) modernity in relation to the interplay between history writing and memory. The paper traces a shift towards *history-as-memory*, that is to a mode of relating to and representing the past specific to the endgame of modernity and as such embodying all the contradictions and paradoxes of this "age of transition".

Keywords: Soviet modernity, anti-communism, history writing, memory, biography

Introduction

In his path-braking „The Political Unconscious" Fredric Jameson rightfully observes that we never really confront a text immediately as a thing-in-itself. Rather, we engage texts in a mediated form through various layers of previous interpretations, and through previous reading habits and categories developed in various interpretative traditions (Jameson, 1981: 9). Surely, while such a perspective itself might be tacitly inherited from Gadamer's hermeneutics, it nonetheless pinpoints to the profound social, historical and active mode that constitutes the act of interpretation. As such, reading and interpretation are, consciously or unconsciously, always-already political.

In this paper I suggest a reading guided by these principles of the Final Report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania (hereafter the Report). Obviously, such a reading occurs on the background of other previous readings (most notably: Buier, 2010; Ciobanu 2009; Ernu et al., 2009) and from a certain theoretical perspective that takes seriously the notion of "symptomatic reading" (Althusser, 1970), while being firmly anchored in an ethnographic tradition for which the production of texts and the ideology they carry is a salient site of research (Wolf, 2001, chapter 26).

However, through the reading I suggest here of the Report I seek not to make a further contribution to the concerns with written texts and their

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reception, but to offer a discussion about history, memory and biography in the post-1989 context. This Report is an ideal site for such an endeavor for not only it condemned the communist past, thus inscribing an authoritative interpretation in relation to it by way of recourse to historical investigation, but it also suggested forms in which the memory of the past and the memory of the conclusions of the Report should be institutionalized for the benefit of the next generations. As such, the Report unites in a single brush issues pertaining to the past, the present and the future, thus being inscribed at the contentious point of their overlapping.

After more than two decades since the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the widespread preoccupations, both East and West, with history, memory and biography and in particular with issues pertaining to the communist past have been formalized in a massive body of literature, academic or lay. This body is by now so massive and so Goliath-like in stature that no individual researcher feels at home anymore on its terrain. Since I am no David either, I will avoid a direct confrontation with the monster in this paper as well. Instead of narrowly focusing on the post-communist transition, largely discussed in terms of Eurocentric Eastern European experiences,

I suggest we shift the ground of contention to more global transformations within the modernity itself. Consequently, in the first part of this paper I seek to open up a discussion in which debates regarding history, memory and biography cease to be obsessions of the "allochronous" post-communist East (in the sense of Fabian, 2002), but dilemmas engendered by the exhaustion of the Western, capitalist modern project worldwide. On this background I seek then to trace different shifts in the relationship between history and memory, history writing and biography as they unfold in this transformation. From this general level, I move then to the particular process of making the commission mandated to produce the Report, highlighting the manner in which the notion of the "past" itself must be constructed in order to be investigated (or to be more precise, how it is constructed *through* investigative practices). This is valid both for the communist past but more poignantly perhaps for the past of the members of the condemnation commission. This focus on constructed and contentious past opens up then the space for the investigation of the (auto) biographical dimensions of the Report and their role in shaping a new form of *history-as-memory*, which constitutes the main argument of this paper. At this stage, I examine how personal memories and experiences become the main constitutive sources of the Report and further explore their relationship with the archival sources informing the text of the Report. Here, I suggest that Secret Police files and the Report are umbilically linked by a shared passion for biography and biographical details. Finally, I suggest that the centrality of biographies and their incorporation into the historical discourse as paradigmatic experiential sources modify significantly our relationship to the past. While history is evicted

and a new emphasis on the pedagogy of memory replaces it, I suggest that modern forms of historical knowledge might be replaced by new modes of divination in relation to official memory.

History, memory and biography in the "age of transition"

Writing the past is never a neutral endeavor, but one loaded with epistemic presuppositions and power relations, determined by rules and institutional canons and traversed by contemporary interests and political motives (Trouillot, 1995). This general observation gained certain poignancy in post-communist Eastern Europe where the writing of history was marked by a certain triumphalism, by the knowledge of a "happy end" and as such it rather expressed the viewpoints of the "winners" of the Cold War (Buden, 2009). However, this celebration was doubled by its underside: the need to "come to terms with the past", the duty to confront its horrors and silenced traumas. These two forces significantly shaped the local modes of historical investigation post-1989. As it were, the local historiographies and local investigations of the past did not even attempt to make claims to "objectivity" and "scientificity" –the two main tenets of the discipline dating back to its 19th century origins. On the contrary, local historiography after 1989 has been imbued with claims to "justice" and "truth". The investigation of the past ceased to be an exercise of objective, analytical and dispassionate knowledge, and instead tried to identify the perpetrators, to console the victims and generally to ascertain a sense of reparation in relation to the past. From this perspective, the legitimacy of the historical narratives is offered not necessarily by the adherence to a set of epistemic rules that govern their making, but more importantly, by their relationship to the "historical truth". Thus, "the truth" is both internal and external to the historical investigation: on one hand the examination of the past has to bring the truth to light, on the other hand, it has to confirm to the already existing categories of truth and justice that oppose victims to perpetrators.

Consequently, the post-socialist historiography, with its emphasis on moral positions and outright rejection of scientific neutrality in relation to the past, was necessarily at odds with the modern way of history writing: that is the dispassionate, objective and total representation of the past in the form of a progressive, all-encompassing and coherent narrative, canonically formalized in the writings of Hegel and Michelet among others. In this mode, "truth" and "knowledge" overlapped: the moment of truth was achieved by the extensive, nay total, knowledge of the past, by the grasping of rules, patterns, causes and connections of historical development. On the contrary, the historiography of communism taking shape in post-communism breaks with this tradition in significant ways. Because of its emphasis on "truth" and "justice" and its ambition to bring history to offer moral judgments, post-communist historiography offered a

clear example of "situated knowledge". The historical voice and the historical narrative were clearly assumed to be those of the "victims" and the take on the past was made from this unambiguous perspective. As such, "truth" and knowledge" are effectively separated: knowledge of the past ceases to overlap with the truth about the past; now truth can be achieved only by presupposing a moral perspective prior to the historical investigation. In this process, the claims to objectivity, dispassionate rationality and total knowledge are either abandoned or just sidelined, or in more radical interpretations, are simply found guilty of trying to minimize the horrors and crimes of the past. The historian, confronted with the horror possed by the past, must necessarily be "engaged". In addition, the very distinction between "history" and "memory" – a central distinction guiding and in fact making possible modern historiography as a field of scientific investigation – is also challenged. Indeed, ever since Romanticism, "History" has been opposed to "Memory". While the former was bestowed with objective and scientific credentials because of its production within the stringencies of particular epistemic rules and scholarly practices, the latter was circumscribed to the level of personal experiences and particular subjective predispositions. History then was considered an abstractization and objectification of the personal and, ultimately, a denial of memory through historicization. The two categories are in fact epistemologically separated and historically embedded in very different, and sometimes opposing, social practices and institutions. Post-communist historiography complicated this relationship further. On one hand it emphasized the epistemic values of "memory" and used it to challenge the scientific pretentions of "history" following the tradition of Romanticism and other forms of modern anti-modernity practices; on the other hand it relativized "history" by considering it just another form of "memory" from which the situated positions have been abstracted and effaced. Thus, "history" and "memory" were both considered equally meaningful "stories". Furthermore, this shift entailed that the terms of the opposition have themselves changed: it is not simply the case that "memory" is a form that opposes "history" (as it has traditionally been the case), but that "history" itself becomes nothing else that a sum of memories. History and memory overlap into a new form of historical narrative and epistemics.[1]

However, because post-communist historiography largely continued to be produced within the same institutional arrangements and epistemic practices that shaped the writing of modern historiography – and I particularly refer here to the 19th century academic division of labor that that makes history writing a distinct field with its own trained specialists; methodological nationalism that informs the study of history; and monography, as the distinct genre of history writing - this significant break in history writing has remained largely unnoticed. In

[1] For an extensive discussion of this point see Jacques Le Goff (1992).

addition, the nationalist tilt characterizing much of the post-communist history writing, with its emphasis on de-Sovietization and national liberation (Buden, 2009), further obscured the importance of this break by maintaining a language redolent of 19th century nation-building historiography albeit in a completely different context and for different purposes.

Seen from this perspective of the break with the mode of modern history writing, post-communist historiography appears to be a part of the wider global process of contestation of the traditional grand historical narratives, a process most familiar by the name of post-modernism. As such, post-communism and post-modernism share not only their function as ideologies of late capitalism (see Harvey, 1991 for post-modernism) but also their deep rejection of some of the basic tenets of modernity, more generally. Thus, post-communism, and its dominant anti-communist ideology that inspired the writing of history and other forms of relationship to the past, effectively represented the post-modernist moment in the former Eastern bloc, constituting a genuine spontaneous ideology of "transition": that is, the subaltern integration of the region into the global assemblages of capital accumulation and its attendant cultural practices and patterns of (cultural) consumption. To put it more directly, post-modernism and post-communism respectively fulfill a similar role: they are both ideologies of the ruling classes in the West and in the East, sharing a similar set of assumptions, institutional networks and material interests. Perhaps the best example of a "quilting point" of the two networks is the explosion of post-communist, dissident memories and literature in the West produced in the East and telling the "true" stories about the past. Thus, post-communist histories of communism were produced in a sense *as* personal memories and stories of dissidents and victims, perfectly fitting an ideological expectation about the East, but also a type of genre specific to post-modernism.

However, in this paper I suggest a different perspective than this immediate level of comparison with post-modernism. Thus, I claim that the type of historiography produced in post-communism about the communist past represents a form of history writing specific to the endgame of modernity; or to put it in the Fukuyama language so familiar in the East, this paper is concerned with history writing at the end of history. In her brilliant "Dreamworld and Catastrophe" (2000), Susan Buck-Morss rightfully argued that the end of the Soviet modernization project, precisely because it was so carefully crafted on the Western capitalist one, has a global relevance for the exhaustion of the Western modernity more generally. What came to a fatal collapse in 1989 was not merely the Soviet bloc, pushed to extinction by a triumphant Western capitalist civilization as the standard narrative has it, but precisely the developmentalist logic inscribed in Western capitalist modernity, of which the Soviet world was an integral part (see also Derluguian, 2005). Thus, I seek to examine post-communist

historiography not as a genre of "post-communist transition" as it has frequently been portrayed, exploring the past in order to identify the victims and perpetrators and thus to "settle account with the past" (Borneman, 1997), but as a type of historiography specific to a global "age of transition" (Wallerstein, 1997). Thus, while in a sense I am suggesting that this type of historiography is post-modern (that is, it attempts a clear break with the past forms of history writing specific to modernity, and it develops in a context in which the premises of the capitalist modern project are exhausted), I significantly diverge from the main tenets of *post-modernism*, which as many critical observers have noted already was part and parcel of the modern project itself (Călinescu, 1987; Jameson, 1981). Rather, I am more interested in understanding how new forms of history writing, and their attendant ideological and political implications, are developed while simultaneously engage with and reject the main tenets of modernity. More specifically, I suggest an anthropological reading of the Final Report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania (issued in 2006) as a form of official historical writing that mobilizes in particular ways forms of history, memory and (auto)biography. Precisely because it engages the Romanian communist history between 1945 and 1989 that is the Soviet-type modernization of the country, the Report becomes an important locus for understanding these mutations in history writing on the background of post-communist anti-communist scholarship. In short, I argue that this type of history writing put forward by the Report represents in fact a form of de-historicization that replaces history with memory. The past acquires thus a form of monumentality and is abstracted from historicity in keeping with a wider social mutation away from modern history. In short, I suggest that in keeping with wider trends of anti-secularism (Wallerstein, 1997), the shift towards memory and memorialization presupposes similar forms of divination and opaque knowledge, available only to the initiates through a process of revelation and illumination occurring at a particular moment in one's biography. This is why in this paper, the use of biography features so centrally.

According to the Presidential mandate, the Commission was tasked to offer a scientific investigation of the communist past in order to lay the grounds for its condemnation. The Commission acted at the very same time as an instance of neutral research of the past and as an inquisitor (in Carlo Ginzburg's sense, 1986); to both write history and to judge it; to be simultaneously neutral and engaged; to pretend epistemic distance and to show sympathy for the victims. Not an easy task! Consequently, this Report represents a highly symptomatic case in which the stringencies of modern history writing and its very own negation meet and contradict each other. As such, the Report seems to represent a paradigmatic case of the aforementioned transition from a modern thinking of history to something else, thus embodying the contradictions, conflicts and paradoxes that such a mutation entails. Furthermore, precisely because it has

to engage directly with the history and outcome of Soviet modernity, the Report has a more global relevance that the narrow focus on post-communist transition might suggest. While heavily enmeshed in the communist past, the Report might in fact have wider relevance for the present and future.

Several critical observers have noticed already that this Report was ultimately nothing else than the institutionalization of a certain partisan view of the past - that of anti-communism, professed by a circle of Romanian post-communist intellectuals, which articulated their interests with the political and social project of the conservative president Traian Băsescu after the 2004 elections (Buier, 2010; Ernu et. al., 2009). In this view, the Report is nothing but the institutionalization of anti-communism in the historiographic and intellectual local millieus, now turbo-powererd by its centrality within state-politics. As such, this „officialization" of the past is necessarily biased and selective, tailoring an ideological view of the communist past in keeping with present day's interests and at the expence of „other voices and other pasts". While I am largely in agreement with these approaches, in this paper my point is different. Instead of trying to analyze the history of the Report from the perspective of what it leaves out, my intention is to look closely to what it actually incorporates in its making. Thus, instead of simply trying to oppose the history the Report puts forward with other alternative histories, including that of its own making, I seek to analyze this history from its own immanent perspective. Consequently, my arguement is that the pretense to an authoritative account of the communist past that the Report puts forward rests precisely on its (auto)biographic and oral character. Put differently, it is not the objective and scientific distance that makes the anti-communist history powerful and hegemonic, but precisely its embracing, its codification of biography, oral histories and memories *as* History. In other words, the strenght of the anti-communist paradigm comes not simply from the hegemonization of the field of historiograhy (which is obvious), put precisely from collapsing the difference between History and histories, History and memories and thus from colonizing both spheres. „History" then simply becomes a form of exemplary memory or exemplary biography. Thus, what we encounter here is not the typical modern relation between history that is being subverted by memory and biography which is present in post-modernism for example (or, its obverse: History that replaces Memory which is unreliable, fragmented and unscientific), but something else: History itself (historiography) is nothing else but a form of memory. Not any memory, but exemplary, tragic, majestic, paradigmatic memories, of heroes and villains. The reaction to modernity that denies the difference between history and memory thus also denies the role of the „masses" and of collective actors more generally. Thus, the main actors of the plot are also its writers, in different roles. Consequently, as I try to show in this paper, the Report is in effect a piece of (auto)-biographical exploration, (self)-presentation and (auto)-poesis.

But there is a further twist to it. Michel Foucault pointed out in the „Order of Things" that history both shapes and „clutters" our memory. As it were, personal memories are never autonomous but always-already shaped by history… "the most erudite, the most aware, the most cluttered area of our memory…" (Foucault apud. Steedman 2001: 66). Thus, while for Foucault too history is internal to memory, history nonetheless preserves a productive power, an "unavoidable element in our thought" from which beings emerge into subjective existences. I claim that precisely this tension between history (internal to memory) and memory, and the quest of mastery over history cluttering the memory is what fundamentally shapes the narrative and historical discourse of the Report. Put differently, the Report is a form of *history-as-memory* seeking to "clutter" the collective memories of the communist past, thus dislodging in the process alternative forms of memories and experiences as "nostalgia" or "negationism" and tellingly calling for a "national pedagogy of memory", instead of more accurate history. (Tismăneanu, oral communication, Romanian Cultural Institute Budapest, 2010).

The making of the Report: the past as a foreign person

President Traian Băsescu's, decision to appoint Vladimir Tismăneanu to head the Presidential Commission mandated to offer the grounds for the condemnation of communism was made in April 2006 amid increased pressures from the Romanian conservative intellectuals for such a gesture. Concomitantly, the decision followed intense internal battles within the ruling coalition that ushered the president to power in late 2004 over the political monopoly of anti-communism - an important electoral resource for the local right-wing parties. Thus, Tismăneanu Commission had a clear mandate: to elaborate a scientific document that would entitle the president to condemn Romanian communism as an „illegitimate and criminal" regime. In December 2006, few days before Romania's accession to the EU, the president read the conclusions of the Report in a special session of the Parliament. After presenting the number of victims, the surveillance mechanisms and institutionalized oppression orchestrated by the Communist Party, the Report, almost 900 pages long in its final form, also "named names". Those considered responsible for the crimes of the regime include Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, the first ruler of the country in the post-war period; his successor, Nicolae Ceausescu, the ill-fated ruler executed during the 1989 revolution; Ion Iliescu, the first post-communist president and considered by some the embodiment of the neo-communist elite that took power after 1989; Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the encomiastic poet of the Ceaușescus and an unrepentant nationalist after 1989; and… Leonte Tismăneanu, Vladimir's father and one the prime architects of the communist system in the 1950s. To these figures of the "absolute evil", the Report opposed the figures of some of the most prominent anti-communist intellectuals

and dissidents. In addition, international institutions like Radio Free Europe and Voice of America were praised for their role in "correctly informing the Romanian population".

Thus, the Report appears to be not just a simple symbolic gesture prior to EU accession, but a document emerging from and, in turn, shaping highly contentious local political struggles. Furthermore, since its scope of research and recommendations covered the present and also the future, the Report was not strictly about the past, but represented at the very same time a clear commentary on contemporary matters. As such, its appearance, content and social function cannot be separated from the wider internal dynamics and struggles of the Romanian socio-political scene. While a political document, the Report nonetheless aimed to offer a historical account of the communist regime, and more specifically, its crimes. Thus, the Report represents a product of historical writing that must be read within the local intellectual tradition of history writing, practices and ideologies. Furthermore, since the Report sought to offer the grounds for the irrefutable condemnation of communism, it is thus placed within a long series of post-communist attempts, both local and regional, to develop and implement "transitional justice" and "lustration" mechanisms.

The final membership of the commission included the president, 18 core members and 20 experts; Cristian Vasile, a historian, had a dual role of both member and expert.[2] A controversial episode in the making of the commission involved the figure of Paul Goma, one of the most prominent anti-communist Romanian dissidents. Though initially Goma expressed his acceptance to be part of the commission, eventually he was dismissed following a personal confrontation with Tismăneanu. Goma contested Tismăneanu's credentials for heading such a commission because of his endorsement of the Ceausescu regime in the 1970s and, in addition, his family's role in building the regime in the 1950s. As such, Goma deemed Tismăneanu unsuitable to head such a commission of condemnation. However, Goma was not the only one to raise such concerns. In a televised show that brought together Gabriel Liiceanu and Andrei Pleşu, the two most important anti-communist public intellectuals in Romania after 1989, Liiceanu expressed his doubts regarding Vladimir Tismăneanu's moral suitability for coordinating a condemnation of communism given his past. However, the

[2] The final structure of the Presidential Commission: president Vladimir Tismăneanu; members: Sorin Alexandrescu, Mihnea Berindei, Constantin Ticu Dumitrescu, Radu Filipescu, Virgil Ierunca, Sorin Iliesiu, Gail Kligman, Monica Lovinescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Marius Oprea, H-R Patapievici, Dragos Petrescu, Andrei Pippidi, Romulus Rusan, Levente Salat, Stelian Tanase, Cristian Vasile, Alexandru Zub; experts: Hannelore Baier, Ioana Boca, Stefano Bottoni, Ruxandra Cesareanu, Radu Chirita, Adrian Cioflanca, Dorin Dobrincu, Robert Furtos, Armand Gosu, Constantin Iordachi, Maria Muresan, Germina Nagat, Eugen Negrici, Novak Csaba Zoltan, Olti Agoston, Cristina Petrescu, Anca Sincan, Virgil Tarau, Cristian Vasile, Smaranda Vultur.

past Liiceanu referred to was not entirely the one questioned by Goma. More specifically, Liiceanu pinpointed to the close relationship between Vladimir Tismăneanu and the former president Ion Iliescu. In 2003 Tismăneanu published a book-length interview with Iliescu in which topics regarding the trajectory of communism in the 20th century overlapped with Iliescu's personal memories, recollections and reflections (Iliescu, 2004). Since it was not an indictment of Iliescu's post-communist measures and politics, in many anti-communist corners the book was considered to be an encomium at the end of Iliescu's presidential career, which seriously questioned Tismăneanu's anti-communist credentials. While Goma remained throughout a staunch critic of the commission and of its president, Liiceanu eventually changed his heart and endorsed the entire project.

I think that what we encounter here is something more than the all too familiar practice of post-communist transition of finger pointing to one's shady moments in the past. Rather, it is a particular mechanism of creating the Other, of excluding people from the community of those who can have a legitimate claim to representing the past, to writing history. It is precisely at this point that biography and history meet: one has to be able to present first a story of the self that is suitable for engaging with the past. Thus, it is not only a matter of making claims over the past, but more importantly, a process that carves out the dialogical and logical space from which the past can be scrutinized. Consequently, the act of retrospection becomes synonymous with introspection, a form of claiming a consistent and legitimate subject-position. From this perspective, perhaps more generally, but surely in the context of dealing with the communist past, the writing of history cannot be separated from the writing of one's self. Every historiography is thus essentially also an autobiography and an exercise in subject-formation. Thus, every historiographical account necessarily presupposes the formulation of a moral universe that legitimizes, justifies and empowers that account.

On this point, recall that initially, Nicolae Corneanu, a priest, and Sorin Antohi, a historian, were also invited by Tismăneanu to take part in the commission as members. However, both resigned following accusations of collaboration with the *Securitate*. The point not to be missed here is that the final members of the commission shared an important common feature: the archives of the former *Securitate* deemed their biographies suitable for writing the Report condemning communism. Thus, we reach here another paradox of this Commission: the research of the *Securitate* archives *preceded* the constitution of the commission itself; as it were the commission called upon to judge communism was formed only after the very same regime (through its most fearful archive) passed its judgment on the commission. Thus, the members of the commission were called upon to judge a regime that already deemed

them suitable for such a judgment. Consequently, as the case of Antohi rendered clear, the biographical truth exposed by the archives prevailed over other criteria, such as his academic credentials, post-communist trajectory or the historical circumstances that led to his collaboration with the former *Securitate* in the first place. Thus, Tismăneanu Report far from evaluating and condemning communism was itself the direct product of the former *Securitate* truth-regime. Thus, put differently, anti-communism (particularly in its Report form) only played a legitimating role for the power of the *Securitate* archives (and its logic of operation more generally) to influence, by discredit or approval, personal biographies and historical trajectories during post-communism.

Thus, far from being a side issue, biographies and contested past trajectories were central in the making of the Commission and its Report. The history presented by Report necessarily presupposed another narrative: that of one's life, that is, an autobiography. As such, issues of justification, of memory, of strategic forgetting, of interpretation had to figure prominently in the making of an auctorial persona that would enable the role of the historian (and judge) of the communist past. Consequently, these same issues had to figure as well in the texture of the Report itself. The auctorial biography was interwoven with the auctorial perspective of the past to such a large extent that they become one: ultimately, the communist past in question in the Report is one and the same with the past of the authors mandated to investigate it and judge it. In her truly remarkable "Police Aesthetics" (2010), Cristina Vatulescu shows how the autobiography was a standard genre in the Stalinist mode of police investigation. Suspects were asked to write and rewrite several times their biographies for the benefit of the investigative body. This autobiographical investigation was intended to bring to light, by way of confession, the blind spots in ones trajectory, susceptible to make him/her an enemy of the regime. But is it not discernable a similar mechanism at play in the making of the Report as well? Were not the people involved expected in a sense to clarify their own biographies in front of a judging instance (starting with Tismăneanu and through all the other members of the commission) that will deem them suitable? Was not the same mechanism of "confession" at play in the case of the members of the commission? In what follows I suggest that the entire text of the Report can be read from this perspective as a form of (collective) autobiography and a form of (collective) confession of its authors regarding their past allegiances. Put differently, the role of the Report is to offer a testimony of its authors (long-lasting) anti-communism; a (re)writing of their biographies as anti-communists. Consequently, the role of the Report is in fact performative, not constative: far from telling the truth about the regime, the authors collectively try to tell the truth about themselves.

Autobiography as History (and vice-versa)

Many observers were puzzled to note the series of errors and factual mistakes dotting the text of the Report. Surely, the sheer size of the document makes these mistakes unavoidable; nonetheless, they bear a different weight in an official document of the Romanian state. One of the most striking example is the (in)exact number of victims perpetrated by the Romanian communist regime. Since identifying and rehabilitating the victims was the main logic behind the Report, such shortfalls seem to run counter to its main aim. Throughout the Report, the figures vary between 500,000 and 2 million victims, for the entire period of the communist regime. However, the Report does not offer the methodological basis for these estimations nor the archival documents that can point to such figures. Not only the figures are inconclusive, but also they are not complete. Many types of data are either completely missing or still buried in some unidentified archives. The point to note here is that, ultimately, the authors of the Report had no particular interest in offering accurate figures, or at least consistent estimations; the sheer discrepancy of the cited figures points in that direction. As it were, the Report was not interested in producing evidence but in arousing sentiments and generating feelings in keeping with its mission of taking the side of the victims and preparing the ground for condemnation. So, in the case of the Report, the numbers (which are usually the mark of positivistic research within modernity's history writing) literally play the role of general metaphors of sufferance and death.

Thus, the classic criteria of truth are thus modified: not correspondence with reality, but its performative shaping and representation. Ultimately, it is of little import the exact number of victims and the methodological manner in which it was ascertained since it is already clear that the regime was "criminal and illegitimate". The reference to numbers simply reproduces performatively this conclusion, generating each time new emotions and new grounds for its condemnation. As mentioned above, once the writers of the Report employ a moral perspective in relation to the past, the logical criteria for truth and evidence are placed outside the text of the Report (under such rubrics of historic crimes, genocide, etc.) and as such the text of Report ceases to bear the stringencies of internal consistency. Its logic is the logic of emotions and moral outrage.

Strictly connected to this aspect is the stylistic heterogeneity of the text, mixing objective and neutral descriptions with a variety of other styles and voices, from the most emotional decrying the fate of the victims to the most punitive, pointing out the mercilessness of the communist rulers, to the ironic and casual depicting some anecdotal elements. Since the main role of the Report is not to analyze but to arouse passions and sentiments, this type of style is perfectly suited for the purpose. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the use of style brings to fore the significance of the narrative voice. Obviously, this element is not absent from any other form of history writing and has received

ample analytic attention at least since the "linguistic turn" (Trouillot, 1995). But in the concrete case of the Report the element of style, and its diversity capable to generate different forms of feelings and reactions, has to be analyzed from an aesthetic perspective as well, similarly to any piece of (historical) literature, following all the conventions and tools of such an analysis. The importance of this aspect cannot be underestimated: it signals the overlapping of a political document with a historical narrative, of a juridical document with an academic one, of making history with writing (about) it. In short, it signals an almost complete coincidence between Power and Truth, each circularly justifying the other.

The use of numbers as metaphors and the importance of style in the writing of the Report are effectively suited both for its perfomative effects and more generally for its autobiographical narrative structure. However, their centrality in the making of the Report emerges out of the historical development of the local field of history writing after 1989. Smaranda Vultur, a Romanian historian, rightfully noted that in the immediate period following the fall of the Romanian communism, historical investigations and historical narratives about the defunct regime had been primarily the work of the literati and the humanist intellectuals. Throughout the 1980s, this category of cultural creators had been associated with various (largely cultural) movements of dissidence against the regime. Thus, they acquired a social aura of honorability and a symbolic position that granted them public voice in the post-communist times. After 1989 this group of people was thus free to pen down their version of the past, one in which they were also the main actors. In addition, their status as producers of historical narratives remained largely unchallenged from other corners of the cultural and academic life. Most of the professional historians, but also sociologists, political scientists and economists among many others, were forced to remain in the shadows of the public life due to their presumed complicity with the ideological and propagandistic actions of the former regime. The case of the historians is perhaps the most representative, with most of the practitioners actively promoting a nationalist historiography in keeping with political goals of Ceausescu's regime (see Verdery, 1991). Consequently, the anti-communist faction of literati and humanists, writing the history in post-communism from their vantage point, and to their advantage, did not only set up the frames of historical investigation, but precisely through their anti-communist practice and ideological agenda managed to effectively silence all other competitors. In short, intellectuals of different professions had to pay heed to the anti-communist paradigm in order to prove their worth and to mark a break with the past, or else risk marginalization or stigmatization.[3]

[3] This is an important issue about how anti-communism became dominant in the Romanian academia but it cannot be approached here. As a short example one must recall the vicious attacks against Adrian Paul Iliescu (who was denounced as an unrepented professor of Marxism before 1989) after he published in "Iluzia anti-comunismului".

But being literati and aesthetic philosophers, their type of historical narrative closely reflected their formation and interests. Thus, they examined communism, both as a historical period and as a political system, from a moral perspective along the axis of Good and Evil, victims, dissidents and perpetrators, Truth and Lie and so on. As a genre, their examination was placed at the intersection of the historical essay and philosophical speculation, thus furthering the de-historicization of the investigated period. Put differently, the past was not only transparent, but more importantly it was regarded simply as a pretext for a wider meditation on the nature of the communist regime and its criminal philosophy. Moreover, this type of investigation produced its own sources, highly different from the ones customarily employed by professional historians and social scientists. Thus, memories, recollections, diaries, confessions, letters and dialogues became privileged sites for the investigation, and modes of representation of the past, creating thus the canon for the (auto)biographical dimension of the historical research. What is important to note however, is not only that this over-reliance on biographical details marginalized more structural and global approaches to the past, while evicting concerns with other historical sources, but also the sources themselves produced within this paradigm bore the mark of its ideological foundations. As it were, the relation was circular. For example, most of the memories of the past were produced along the same lines governing the anti-communist discourse: victimization, sufferance, resistance, etc. on the background of total evil. Thus, the anti-communist paradigm offered the discursive space for the production of memories of victimhood and resistance, while these memories in turn fostered, reinforced and substantiated anti-communism's main claims. Furthermore, the prominent role played by personal memories, by memory in general, in the anti-communist paradigm led to a complex process of "memorialization" and "commemorialization" of the past. Thus, the memory of the victims and of their sacrifices was supposed to be honored and respected rather than investigated, deconstructed or analyzed. Consequently, this phenomenon of memorialization furthered the de-historicization already present in the anti-communist paradigm. This anti-communist approach to history coupled with an over-reliance on memory sources used in a literary and essayistic fashion are highly visible in the structure and narrative of the Report too. A large number of memories, diaries and recollections are woven into the structure of the Report as sources and data while entire sections of the Report deal with biographical details concerning members of the communist elite or other important actors. Perhaps even more importantly, is the fact that some of the most prominent authors of the Report are also its main actors, inscribing the text with a powerful form of self-referentiality. For example, the Report discusses at length the role of Tismăneanu's family in establishing the communist rule in Romania. Similarly, Ticu Dumitrescu, Radu Filipescu, Virgil Ierunca, Monica Lovinescu and Stelian

Tanase, members of the commission that wrote the Report, are mentioned and praised for their opposition to the regime. Thus, many of the authors of the Report are at the very same time the subjects and objects of the historical investigation of the Report, while at the same time being called to act as judges of the past in which they figure prominently.

This mode of historical investigation with the past has been the trademark of the members affiliated with *Grupul pentru Dialog Social* (GDS), an institutional framework which emerged in the days of the 1989 Revolution and had the explicit purpose of bringing together the various anti-communist forces with a view to play a significant part in shaping the transition towards the new regime. From these institutional and ideological positions, the members of the GDS openly demanded not only the standard decommunization measures (the opening of the *Securitate* archives, a lustration law, restitution of the confiscated property, etc.) but also supported the swift implementation of neoliberal measures (privatization, financialization, deregulation, tax reduction, minimal state, etc.) while heavily criticizing, under the label of neo-communists, all those who opposed these measures and delayed their implementation. Calls for a "trial of communism" –the single most common demand widely cherished by the GDS members- were thus explicitly linked with calls for neoliberal reform, the former considered the necessary precondition for the success of the latter and both the proper measures for a definitive and genuine break with the communist past. These overlapping trajectories intersected once more in the making of the Presidential Commission of condemnation and its Final report, emphasizing once more the role (collective) biographies played in this endeavor. Thus, it is important to note that most of the people constituting the anti-communist camp and who later manned the commission shared a personal, direct and extensive experience of communism. For example, most of the founding members of GDS in 1989 were at least in their 40s, if not older, coming of age in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, their relationship with the communist past was largely an experiential and existential one and their anti-communism was inextricably linked with their own biographies, memories and lived experiences. Little wonder then that their purpose of writing about the past was mainly introspective and reflective – if anything their writings resembled some "meditations" about the communist regime, about life, death, time, human nature, etc. – and thus were quite remote from the conventions and purposes of standard academic inquiry. Note by way of contrast Vladimir Tismăneanu's more ambiguous position. His anti-communist was not primarily rooted in his own biography (in fact, as mentioned already his biography was constantly brought up with a question mark) but in his academic and scientific credentials acquired in an international setting after he emigrated from Romania. This contradiction between lived communism and its scientific analysis was espoused by many GDS anti-communist intellectuals (Pleşu and Liiceanu among

them) who simply contested the need for a scientific investigation of communism by arguing that the lived experiences of the regime were enough for an immediate condemnation. In fact, Vladimir Tismăneanu was fully aware of this contradiction in the Romanian local setting, and as such in his introduction to Stalinism for All Seasons (2003) he basically linked his personal biographical trajectory to his scientific interest in Romanian communism, thus acknowledging indirectly the central role of lived experience and biographical acumen in the case of Romanian anti-communism.

Thus, besides being a form of self-presentation and confession, the Report appears to be also a form of overcoming one's personal trauma, of settling one's account with his/her own past. Surely, many critical commentators have noted already that the Report offered the best possibility to fight the regime in its absence, to exercise a form of bold, vocal anti-communism that was resoundingly absent before 1989 (Ernu et al., 2009). Thus, the act of condemnation was, to put in in Freudian terms, an act of denial: of communist modernity (as it is rendered clear in the text of the Report) but also, more specifically, of one's own past of quietism and acquiescence since most of the members of the condemnation commission have made their careers during and within the institutional settings of communism. In addition, for many members of the commission, but also for many Romanian anti-communists in general the denial of communism through anti-communism is a straightforward denial of the name of the Father: a symbolic killing of the phallic order that constitutes in turn the taboo of the post-socialist society. These aspects certainly deserve a closer investigation not least because in terms of generational experience we encounter a situation in which the "fathers" were committed communists and anti-capitalists in the 1950s only for the "sons" to turn committed anti-communists and neoconservatives in the 1990s and after. Surely, this dynamic unfolded within a wider process of class formation engendered by the Soviet modernity itself, an issue too large to be approached in this paper. However, the fact remains that the biographical element remains salient at this level too, offering a glimpse into particular processes of ruling class reproduction.

Finally, on this canvas dominated by biographical trajectories inserting at different critical points into the making and writing of history, I turn now briefly to the relationship between the Report and the archives, particularly those of the former *Securitate*. The first thing to note is that structurally and stylistically the Report is no different from a *Securitate* file: what is the Report after all if not different forms of evidence, highly heterogeneous and compiled together by a series of authors, amassed in order to set the grounds for an indictment (communism in the case of the Report)? In addition, the genre of the "report" itself is typical of the writing produced by the *Securitate* at different levels of its functioning and during the different stages of surveillance (Chivu and Albu 2007). Thus, we can note that the logic of the former *Securitate* penetrates at

different stages, and in different ways, the making and narrative of the Report: first, at the level of membership of the commission the *Securitate* files act as a screen, sorting out biographies and trajectories in accordance with their "truth" regime; secondly, the logic of the *Securitate* file enters the very narrative of the Report by way of autobiography and confession marked by a heterogeneous style and a performative use of metaphors; finally, the genre of the "report" itself, with its focus on gathering evidence for an indictment, shapes the mode of expression of the condemnation commission. Surely, the "report" is far from being specific only to communist secret police files. It is in fact a product of state functioning in modernity, the salient genre (and product) of modern bureaucracies. Thus, precisely at this level, I think we encounter the deep contradictions, symptomatic almost, shaping the Report: while it seeks to condemn (Soviet) modernity and realize a break with it, the manner in which this break is effected is still caught up in a deeply (Soviet) modern assemblage of institutions and presuppositions. Far from being an indictment of its failures, the Report is the ultimate proof of the long-lasting effects of (Soviet) modernity.

However, it is not only that the logic of the *Securitate* files shape the (auto)biographical focus of the Report, but the Report itself uses these files as (auto)biographical information. For example, the text of the Report is full of details about the lives of prominent party members, *Securitate* perpetrators and dissidents gathered from various files of the *Securitate* archives. To be sure, *this* has been the precise role of the archives in informing the writing of history in modernity, only that in this case the usage of these archives necessarily entails accepting the logic that produced these archives in the first place. The fact of the matter is that the *Securitate* archives themselves are in effect a sum of overlapping biographies and biographical details of the people under surveillance. These details were gathered either through surveillance, denunciation, recorded oral conversations, autobiographical statements or, more to the point, a combination of all. As Cristina Vatulescu rightfully showed their purpose was not necessarily to lead up to indictment but to accumulate various details about one's life and biographical trajectory. Little wonder then that the practice to use the *Securitate* archives as biographical sources has been quite widespread. And I do not refer here necessarily to the post-1989 denunciation practices based on findings in the files of the archives, but to something more precise: the widely popular habit among many anti-communist intellectuals to re-write and re-interpret their communist biographies following the opening of their *Securitate* files and based on, or in dialogue with, the materials presented there (Andreescu 2009, Munteanu 2007, Tănase 2002, Tudoran 2010, etc.). For example, Andreescu wrote that his *Securitate* file was a highly useful aid-memoire because it saved some elements or details that he could not otherwise remember: the exact day and hour of his first arrest, the content of his pockets during one interrogation, even

some dialogues between him and his parents while being under home surveillance. Thus, instead of being regarded as historical sources, congealing the history and the power relations of their own making (Trouillot, 1995), the archives of the former *Securitate* are, at this level at least, also integrated into the realm of memory and biography, abstracted from the conditions of their production, functioning and post-communism instrumentalization. Thus, in this light, the *Securitate* archives appear to be a vast collection of biographies and personal and collective memories, truly accessible and intelligible only to those who actually lived through the moments recorded there, or to the cast of the professional experts, capable to decipher their meaning. This brings me to my last point.

By way of Conclusion: The policemen of memory

In this paper I suggested a symptomatic reading of the Final Report based on which the Romanian president condemned communism in 2007. I argued that the Report should be read as a form of (auto)biographical investigation, producing "truth" and "knowledge" not necessarily about the past but about those involved in examining that past. As such, the very notion of "past" appears highly contingent and always in the making. Furthermore, I suggested that this (auto)biographical mode of the Report, by way it overlaps with issues of confession, self-presentation and auto-poesis, both challenges the manner in which history has been written in modernity while remaining deeply anchored in those presuppositions. The shared features between the Report and key elements of the *Securitate* archive (acceptance of its truth regime, the genre of the "report" and the collections of biographies that constitute its archives) further testify to this ambiguous and contradictory relationship. At a more general level, and in order to circumscribe this discussion, I suggested that the Report represents in fact a genre of writing specific to the endgame of (Soviet) modernity. Rather than simply considering the Report a genre of post-1989 transition, I emphasized that it might as well be relevant for wider "age of transition" in the global system. The trademark of this transition in history writing seems to be a wide trend of de-historicization in favor of memorialization and I tried to suggest how this shift occurs at the tension between history and memory. In this shift, the role of biography seems salient since it can accommodate both history and memory while emphasizing at the same time the virtues of lived, embodied experiences.

But this mutation is not without wider consequences. It presupposes a new form of historical knowledge (and historical writing), different from the traditional modern one rooted in Enlightenment and as such in the presupposition (biased as it was) of the universality of reason. The shape of this new historical form of knowledge is still uncertain, but as I tried to argue the Report might be a good indication of what is in store. The final recommendations of the Report ask for a series of state-sponsored measures (like a high school manual, a museum of

communism, a monument to victims, a national institute of memory etc.) that in a nutshell prepare the ground for the implementation of a "national pedagogy of memory": that is, a form of expert form of administering the memory of the past. Surely, such demands are only too natural to a conservative approach to the past, but they might have a different type of relevance formulated at the end of the Soviet modernity. It is not only that such an approach has a profound anti-secularist bent to it (and in the Romanian case this is explicitly so), but also by replacing history with memory it reduces knowledge to a process of revelation and illumination that in turn simply deems one's biography extraordinary and meaningful (this shattering transformation is a recurrent topic in the biographies of many communists who turned vehement anti-communists, Tismăneanu being one of them). The mystery of the past will then be accessible only to these initiated few who will also act as policemen of correct memory, in a corporate society reminiscent of G.K. Chesterton's universe dominated by police-philosophers.

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THE COLONIZATION OF THE PAST AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MNEMONIC ORDER

MIHAI-STELIAN RUSU [*]

ABSTRACT. Starting from the assumption that every society develops its own regime of memory to support and strengthen social order, this paper analyzes the content of 26 Romanian history textbooks in order to unfold how mnemonic order is assembled through these ideological vehicles. Furthermore, the purpose of this paper is to empirically test the evolutionary model of societal memory, which holds that each socio-political revolution triggers a major process of reconfiguring the socially promoted image of the past. Textbook analysis support the advanced hypothesis, in that the historiographical discourse through which the nation-state shapes societal memory underwent a succession of stages, each fracture that broke the linearity of the discourse closely following the major socio-political changes produced in the structure of Romanian society. Thus, a first "mnemonic revolution" occurred due to the emergence of national consciousness, favored by the introduction of compulsory primary education. The next major break in the structure of societal memory occurred after the communist takeover, which led to the overthrow of the monarchy. Then, along with the progressive independence from Moscow, the textbooks reflect the production of an intrasystemic mnemonic revolution, through the ethno-nationalism twist. Finally, the revolution of 1989 led to the shattering of the monolithic character of the previous historical discourse, engaging now in various directions. However, despite the liberalization of the field of historical production, the nation state continues to intervene in a corrective vein into the work of historians when the image of the past proposed by them cast doubt upon the naturality claimed by the state.

Keywords: mnemonic order, regime of memory, societal memory, mnemonic revolution, theoretical realism, memory market

Introduction[**]

The truistical assumption upon which this paper is grounded states that any society has its own "mnemonic order", *i.e.* a regime of memory that consolidates social order. In other worlds, the mnemonic order is a basic component of social

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order, whose social function is that of creating a shared sense of the past. A tentative definition of mnemonic order might state that mnemonic order is the regime of memory installed in a given society, supported by particular institutions specialized in the administration of the past, by social practices through which the socially sanctioned past is produced and reproduced, and also by the products in which the sponsored image of the past is objectified. If we accept the conclusion of Bellah et al (1985) that any community is a "community of memory", it follows that constructing a strong mnemonic order is one of the solutions to the problem of social order (*i.e.* the primary issue of sociology, at least in its Parsonsian version, Parsons, 1937).

The thesis defended in this paper claims that mnemonic order, as part and parcel of social order, is tributary to the prevailing ideology, its function being to legitimize and reinforce social order. Precisely because of the legitimizing potential held by tradition, the current social order colonizes the past so as to instrumentalize it and thus to put it in the service of contemporary interests. However, due to social change, sometimes manifested in its most violent form, *i.e.* socio-political revolution, which might altogether overthrow of the previous social order (*status quo ante*), the old mnemonic order becomes an obstacle to the new project of social order. Under these conditions, a phenomenon that I called "mnemonic revolution" is put in motion (Rusu, 2011a), by which the entire mnemonic order is overthrown along with the old social order, and a new process of rearticulating a coherent global image of the past, fully compatible with the newly established social order, is being started. In other words, a re-colonization of the past is taking place, a sociocultural operation of re-making the past that follows the prescriptions of the newly prevailing ideology.

Mnemonic order and history

Before unfolding the argument, some terminological distinctions are necessary. Following in the footsteps of M. Halbwachs (1925/1992), *collective memory* reflects the set of knowledge about the past shared by members of a group; it is the representation that the social group is promoting about its own past. In case this representation is translated into a cultural medium giving it temporal endurance and intergenerational transmissibility, collective memory becomes *cultural memory*. If it is not transferred to a cultural support, collective memory is *social memory*, being more fragile and difficult to transmit to future generations. In the absence of a cultural carcass to ensure its durability, the content of social memory is made up of "homeless memories" (Tota, 2001). *Societal memory* is the hegemonic image that society cultivates, promotes, and publicly displays about its own past. Since societies are circumscribed by the nation-states that act as containers which envelop those societies, the content of societal memory overlaps to a large extent over national memory and official history. However, societal memory is more than official history, the latter being only a component of the former. Societal memory

constitutes the dominant system of social representations about the past, which is articulated through the interaction between official history and vernacular memory. Under the blanket of societal memory can survive objecting *counter-memories* (Foucault, 1977) against that hegemonic interpretation.

Societal memory (*i.e.* the relationship constructed by the current social order with its own past), due to its ideological legitimizing potency, is an effective tool by which the nation-state imposes its nationalistic vision in the collective consciousness. The nation-state disseminates societal memory into the social body through three media: a) textually, by condensing knowledge about the past in textbooks, narratives, literature, which serve as protective casings; b) objectually, by concentrating meaning about the past in material objects, such as statues, memorial sites, and other *lieux de mémoire* (Nora, 1989); c) ritually, which implies that the past is preserved, publicly exhibited and reproduced through ritual practiced such as ceremonies, commemorations, anniversaries etc. This paper is centered on the way in which mnemonic order is built and societal memory is shaped by national history school manuals. National history textbooks are "weapons of mass instruction" (Ingrao, 2009) to which the nation state resorts in order to inject into public consciousness the official interpretation of the past. Due to state control over both the structure and content of textbooks, they are usually deeply imbued with nationalist doctrine, which monumentalizes the past and thus promotes patriotic feelings and fosters loyalty and obedience to the current *status quo.*

The central objective of this paper is to empirically test the evolutionary model of societal memory (Rusu, 2011a), whose ideational hardcore includes the following four propositions:

a) *Societal memory is socially constructed* (in the temperate and trivial sense exposed above), which implies that the global picture of the past is the result of the labor of selecting, interpreting, arranging, embellishing, and systematizing. Moreover, this implies the existence of an *institutional mnemonic infrastructure* (Rusu, 2011b) responsible for the production, management, and exhibiting the accepted vision of the collective past (educational system, family, mass-media, and museum are the social institutions most relevant to this process – Misztal, 2003).
b) *The social construction of mnemonic order is carried out according to the blueprint endorsed by the contemporary dominant ideology*, which means that memory is put in the service of the present, being molded according to the political-ideological imperatives of the moment.
c) *Socio-political change will trigger the transformation of societal memory*, which means that a socio-political revolution will generate, as a side effect, a *mnemonic revolution*, through which the entire image of the past sponsored and promoted by the defunct social order is removed and

replaced by another representation of the past compatible with the new project on social order. In short, the overthrow of the social order causes the overthrow of the mnemonic order, and any post-revolutionary construction of a new social order requires the construction of a new regime of memory fully consistent with this project. Of course, the causal relation is not a simple mechanical one. It is possible that counter-memories or alternative memories to be the precondition of a overthrow of socio-political order, but after the collapse of the social order reinforced by the old regime of memory, the same dual process of de-structuring the outdated image of the past and cementing the new mnemonic order is initiated.

d) *In the long run, the evolution of societal memory follows the model of "punctuated equilibria"* (Eldredge and Gould, 1972), which implies that the process of building the mnemonic order is a slow and cumulative one, for a long time the mnemonic order being preserved in a phase of stagnation (*stasis*). The state of stagnation is disturbed by moments of "collective effervescence" (Durkheim, 1912/1995), usually in the guise of social movements, which have a creative and renewing effect on the social order, causing significant mutations. These dislocations in the structure of social order reverberate on the structure of mnemonic order that undergoes adaptive changes in the new social order.

The generic hypothesis that guided the this research stated that history textbooks (as state vehicles through which societal memory is created and transmitted) are strongly colored by the prevailing ideologies, being formulated in full accordance with the interests and imperatives of the present. The corollary of this conjecture is that the discourse inscribed in textbooks is discontinuous, even fractured, major ruptures occurring shortly after the production of a systemic change. It is the phenomenon I named "mnemonic revolutions", set in motion by socio-political revolutions, when the entire previous construction of the past is abandoned and a new project of articulating a retrospective representation of the past based on renewed principles is being launched.

In order to test the existence of major disparities between the manuals of two different periods, I analyzed the content of 26 history textbooks produced in a time frame ranging from 1866 to 2006. The dimensions analyzed were: the chronological structure, how the patterning of the past was done, the selection of temporal thresholds infused with meaning, taking into account the fact that analytical breakdown of the past is always involving a consistent dose of artificiality and even arbitrariness; the level of subjectivism betrayed by the nationalistic pathos and chauvinist drifts; the strategies of legitimizing the state-nation by identifying the ancient roots of the current state; the ways in which the nationalist ideology (which is the ideological foundation of the national state) was projected

back into the past; the role of religion in general and of orthodox Christianity in particular in the historical development of Romania; portrayal of ethnic minorities, which is a good indicator of the degree of ethnocentrism involved in the conceptualization of the past.

The hypothesis predicts that each major socio-political transformation set in motion a side effect that causes the reorganization of societal memory, a process that can be detected by analyzing history textbooks which acts as tools used for creating and transmitting the official memory sanctioned by society. Therefore, we can identify with relative ease the ruptures in the regime of memory following socio-political changes. So if we confine the analysis to the period between the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century (a constraint imposed by the lack of textbooks in previous centuries) the turning points in the socio-political evolution can be listed: the unification of 1918; the communist seizure of power in 1945 followed by the abdication of the King and the dissolution of monarchy in 1947; the nationalistic twist initiated by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej and further exacerbated by N. Ceaușescu; and finally, the Revolution of 1989 that led to the controlled implosion of the authoritarian regime and to the construction of a new post-totalitarian order "not *on the ruins* but *with the ruins* of communism" (Stark, 1996: 995). Our hypothesized expectation states that each of these transforming moments will produce a reconfiguration of the global image of the past that society promotes about itself. The objective of this endeavor is to decide upon: a) the existence of alleged bends in the elaboration of the past, and if it exists, b) to appreciate the magnitude of the changes made in the configuration of the past.

A first mnemonic revolution is registered with the introduction of compulsory public education by the Education Law of 1864. Compulsory (historical) education supposed the homogenization and standardization of the vision of the past so it can be transmitted in a methodical fashion to young generations. By assimilating this polished picture of the past, young people were socialized and integrated into the national order of the young Romanian state.

Worth mentioning is an exceptional case: the work entitled *History of Transylvania for Popular Schools*. Published in Blaj in 1866 by Ion Micu Moldovan, it presents a view that can be called *regiocentric* since it treats Transylvania as an autonomous independent entity, listed neither in the Hungarian imperialist project, nor in the Romanian territorial claims. This regiocentric orientation is clearly apparent from the way in which the Transylvanian past is sequenced. Any threshold chosen as delimiters of historical intervals contain a considerable dose of artificiality, even arbitrariness, since every historian may select what s/he considers to be decisive moments to turn them into indicators of the beginning or the end of a stage of history. In addition to the inherent relativity of any chronological periodization, these efforts to analytically divide the past reveals the moments regarded as essential in the history of society, worthy of being invested as

temporal milestones. Selecting critical events through which the past is symbolically fractured indicates that the history of Transylvania is understood in an independent manner, disconnected from the Romanian national project that was producing simultaneously a unitary and homogenized vision which also included Transylvania. Perhaps the greatest "anomaly" that appears in the compartmentalization of the past (looking back from the perspective of the present) is not including as a temporal milestone the year 1600 in the partitioning of the past. The moments selected as temporal frontiers are of fundamental importance since they provide the skeletal framework into which societal memory is elaborated.

Another deviation from the "normality" of contemporary historiography is the interpretation of the act by which Michael the Brave (*Mihai Viteazul*) united the three principalities: "Michael the Hero has made himself now also the Lord of Transylvania in the name of Emperor Rudolf" (Moldovan, 1866: 59). Obviously, the significance of the event is not associated with any personal intention of fulfilling a historical predestination, as Romanian historiography later treated his action. Very interesting to follow is how the past of Transylvania was represented after 1918, when it was absorbed and integrated in the Romanian space.

Going through successive editions of the history textbook published by Th. Avramescu Aguletti (1915, 1920, 1936) before and after the inclusion of Transylvania into Romania, the trajectory of the historical discourse does not break its linearity and continuity, so there is no question of producing any mnemonic revolution. Perhaps this rectilinear line can be explained by the fact that the struggle over the past started much earlier and continued long after that. The collision points between the Romanian and Hungarian historiographies (especially the place and time of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people) continued to be hardly disputed both before and after winning Transylvania by the Romanian side, extending along the entire twentieth century. "The problem of problems," as it was called, relating to Daco-roman continuity North of Danube, was not finally settled until this day, continuing to ignite the highly inflammable spirits of nationalists posting on both barricades. In any case, the union of 1918 does not generated a reconceptualization of the image of the past because this image has been already articulated in advance, for vindictive purposes. The emergence of national consciousness caused the construction of the nation's collective memory before the process of nation-building to be complete. In this case, collective memory pre-dated the socio-political revolution, precipitating the movement of national unification through the normative pressure that the collectively imagined image of the past on the conditions of the present state. The collective memory of Romanians speeded up the processes of national unification taking as the exemplary model the ancient Dacian state, allegedly renewed in 1600 by Michael the Brave and reborn in 1918. Therefore, the socially shared image of the past which settles in collective memory has the potential of determining the present, providing a normative model to be established.

So far, I have argued that a first mnemonic revolution was produced by the formation of Romanians national consciousness, through which the Romanian nation was projected as an imagined community (Anderson, 1983) founded upon a shared collective past. The unification of Transylvania with Romania in 1918 produced no major changes in the structure of collective memory. On the contrary, collective memory can be conceived as a causal factor, the nationalist claims being based on the argument of historical belonging to the same retrospectively imagined community.

If the historical discourse embedded in textbooks has evolved linearly from the late nineteenth century until the eve of World War II, a radical rupture can be identified once the Romanian Communist Party (under its various names) took over the power. The rectilinear continuity of historical discourse until now has been broken and reoriented according to the ideological commandments of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. After the installation of communism and the forced abdication of the King that led to the overthrow of the monarchy, the new power has proposed to launch a program of cultural revolution that included the project of accommodating the past with the precepts of the dominant ideology borrowed from USSR. The first move was the introduction of the principle of a single approved textbook in order to ensure the uniformity of the officially promoted image of the past, and the suppression of alternative visions. The editor charged with the responsibility to elaborate the official textbook, which have to have a deep and robust "scientific" foundation in dialectical materialism, was Mihail Roller. In 1947, as Director of the Board of Education within the School of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Comity of RLP, Roller coordinated the writing of the paper *History of Romania* (textbook which was later reprinted under the title *History of R.P.R.*), which was the sole source of authority over the past until 1962 (Pleşa, 2006).

The handbook is structured entirely on ideological postulates of the Marxist scheme, being based on the following fundamental principles:

a) Class struggle is the engine that propels the evolution of history, and consequently, the entire past is reinterpreted in terms of this axiomatic principle. Structural contradictions and social antagonisms are identified, carved out and exacerbated, demonstrating by these the scientific character of the new socialist historiography as well as the deep injustices inherent in the old social order. Reorienting the historical discourse from the focus on imposing historical figures towards the popular masses was meant to depict the former as belonging to exploiting class, as an attempt to legitimize the communist regime by associating it with proletarian and peasant masses;
b) The essential role played by the Soviet Union in Romania's history has been strongly highlighted, wherever it was possible to emphasize the decisive influence of the Slavs. Russian culture has been glorified

and adopted as supreme model. The impact of Slavic migrant population in shaping the character of Romanian people was also strongly accentuated;

c) The worship of the Russian culture was performed in negative contrast with Western decadence and imperialist values;
d) The strong anti-nationalist attitude prevalent in early communist internationalism was reflected in the reinterpretation of the meaning of union of 1600 by extirpating its nationalist meaning;
e) The oppressors-oppressed dichotomy was also applied for the union of 1859: the only motivation behind the union was the interests of the bourgeoisie to expand the sales market, having no other national substratum;
f) The partitioning of the past have been reconfigured: contemporary history began with the Great Socialist Revolution of 1917 and not the Union achieved in 1918, a choice reflecting as evident as possible the adoption of a sovietocentric vision;
g) The overemphasis put on the significance of the remonstrative demonstrations organized by communist sympathizers in the interwar period, together with overbidding the sacrifice and merits of the underground communist party, were attempts to colonize the contemporary history (Pleşa, 2006: 169);
h) The relegation of the importance of the church in Romanian history, alongside with the atheization of historiography by evacuating the church from the pages of the past (*apud* Pleşa, 2006).

In summary, the sovietocentric new historiography marked a major departure from the previously articulated image of pre-communist nationalist ideology. Enrolled in the internationalist framework promoted by incipient communism, Roller's anti-nationalist textbook operated a radical reinterpretation of the Romanian past, from the pseudo-scientific standpoint of dialectical materialism. The entire history was drawn into Marxist-leninist scheme and reorganized in terms of the dogmatic precepts of the class struggle. This attempt of institutional rewriting of history was an unprecedented attack against the sedimented collective memory of the previous era, and therefore can be considered a mnemonic revolution.

The Sixties marked the initiation of an autonomisation policy from the tutelage of USSR, a progressive trend of detaching from the Soviet leash being outlined, that culminated with the complete sociocultural autharchization of Romania into an ultra-nationalist communist regime (although, theoretically, nationalist communism is a contradiction in terms, reality has confirmed this paradoxical evolution). N. Ceauşescu, elected general secretary of RCP in 1965 and head of the state in 1967, took over, emphasized and exacerbated the already

formed nationalistic tendency to paroxysmal levels. However, the history textbook coordinated by Dumitru Almaş, published in the year of the new leader coming to power (1965), continues the line drawn by M. Roller in terms of the radicality of the discourse grounded in dialectical materialism, whilst dropping the anti-nationalist character clearly visible in the official textbook edited by Roller. Already in the opening of the book, the authors emphatically set out the scientific principles upon which the book is structured, stating that "history has been and is being forged by working people" (p. 3), a claim doubled by the sentence "our motherland's history is primarily the history of the working people" (ibid.). The stream of shifting away from the officially declared internationalism of the communist movement toward ethno-nationalism was at this time in a state of incipient emergence, so that the discourse present in textbooks has not been restructured from the ground, but only partially recalibrated. In this transitional period, the leading principles that guided the entire endeavor of constructing the past were not developed in a coherent manner. That's why the textbook is a mixture of internationalist and nationalist elements, which glorifies the Slavonic influences while monumentalizing the national past.

The periodization of the past is fully consonant with the Marxist schema of social evolution: a) primitive communism; b) slave society (1st to 3rd century AD); c) feudal order (from 3rd century to 1848 AD), d) capitalist order (from 1848 until 1944); e) socialist order. Although not explicitly mentioned, included in the schema is a sixth stage: f) communist social order, which coincides with the end of history. Albeit any periodization is inherently artificial, since setting temporal boundaries is a subjective selection, in the timeframe developed by communist historiography can be detected a phenomenon we might call *theoretical realism*, which means the substitution of factual reality with the "reality" prescribed by the theory. Empirical reality is forced to subordinate to the theoretical prescriptions, the theory having absolute priority over the empirical facts. In the communist division of the past into five stage (plus an implicitly desired one), the existence of a "slave society" postulated by Marxist theory was imposed on historical reality (it could be said even invented and later "empirically proofed" through the production of biased evidence).

The whole history "of Romania" (that begins as early as primitive communism!) is permeated by the inexorable law of class struggle between "the haves" and "the have-nots": the Aurelian withdrawal in 271 AD was caused largely by the struggles of Dacians against Roman exploitation; the role of Slavic migratory waves are credited as determining the Romans to abandon the province; but the essential causal factor was the internal structural contradictions of the slave social system (Almaş; 1965: 26). Naturally, the social unrests are overemphasized, any social movement being analyzed through the interpreting key of class struggle (formulations like the following are common throughout the entire text: "the mass struggle against feudal exploitation" (p. 84), "the sharpening of class struggle" etc.).

The nationalistic twist is detectable in comments on the action of Michael the Brave: "the goal of struggle and sacrifice of Michael has carved deep into the memory and heart of the people, strengthening awareness of the dignity, unity, and zeal for freedom" (Almaş, 1965: 81). The recent past is monopolized by the praising discourse of communist movement, investing with heroic character the strikes, struggles, and protests of workers in attempting to colonize the contemporary history (Pleşa, 2006).

In summary, the textbook coordinated by D. Almaş (1965) epitomizes the confusing period of transition from internationalism toward an ethno-nationalistic orientation, including heterogeneous elements, which turns the historical discourse into an ideologically incoherent patchwork. However, the textbook contains enough diversions from the direction set by M. Roller to assert the beginning of a mnemonic reform. Next, we will follow if textbooks published after the decisive moment of decoupling from Soviet Union in the spring of 1968 and the launching of the program of "cultural revolution"[1] of 1971 have intensified the trend toward ethno-nationalism, materializing into a mnemonic revolution.

Published four years later, in 1969, the textbook coordinate by the same Dumitru Almaş reflects in a stronger manner the hybrid character of Romanian historiography. The deepening polarization of the two opposite trends can be observed: a) sovietocentrism, and b) ethno-nationalism. The timeframe chronologically structured after the Marxist schema, the principle of class struggle, the Marxist theory of state seen as a "machine for the maintenance of the domination of one class over another" (V. I. Lenin) (Almaş, 1969: 13), and the portrait of Lenin (on the entire page 165) are kept. Simultaneously, and contradictory, the nationalist discourse is strengthen, especially around the act of Michael the Brave.

In 1976, the ambivalent tendency of the two contradictory orientations is resolved in favor of nationalism. The textbook *History of Our Homeland* (1976), designed for the fourth grade and signed also by the same D. Almaş illustrates very clearly the choice for indigenous perspective and the abandonment of the sovietocentric vision. The achievement of Michael the Brave is reassessed in a more nationalistic vein, and the Union of 1918 is presented as "the fulfillment of the ancient dream of the Romanian people. Very relevant is the debut of the cult of personality: if the 1969 textbook figured the portrait of Lenin, his place was taken now by "Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu, President of RSP", covering the entire page 183.

The textbook conceived for eight grades by Hadrian Daicoviciu under the title of *Romania's Ancient and Medieval History* (1985) is representative of the new direction adopted by Romania historiography in Ceauşescu era. A brief excursus: as state entity, Romania appeared on the political scene only in 1859. Before the

[1] The cultural revolution was triggered with the "July Theses" proclaimed in the speech delivered by N. Ceauşescu in 1971 after his return from the official visits to P. R. China and North Korea.

unification of Moldova and Wallachia, Romania did not exist except as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983) in the collective imaginary of Moldovans, Wallachians, and Transylvanians that have tuned on their national consciousness. Before the creation of a Romanian national consciousness (which has occurred starting with the eighteenth century), Romania did not existed even as a collectively imagined projection of a dispersed community! Therefore, *stricto sensu*, Romania does not have an "ancient", not even a "medium" history, but Romania's history begins only from the moment of collectively imagining a Romanian community, *i.e.* somewhere in the eighteenth century. Confounding the history of the place with the history of the nation is a ubiquitous ideological bias deeply embedded in Romanian historiography!

The partitioning system of history of Marxist origin is preserved, even if its exact application is renounced: the "slave social order" no longer finds its place in the overall picture, being marginalized only to Greek colonies in Dobrogea, which are considered "slave states" (Almaş, 1985: 7). Romania's ancient and medium past (*sic!*) is split into: a) primitive commune; b) ancient epoch; c) pre-feudalism; d) early feudalism; e) developed feudalism; f) the decomposing period of feudal order (1985: 6). The Slavs role in shaping Romanian character and language is completely removed from the narrative, but class struggle remains a fundamental principle in understanding historical evolution. The Marxist theory of the state is applied to explain the formation of the Burebista's state: "the scission of Dacian society into antagonistic classes lead to the appearance of the state, since the ruling class, the nobility, needed a tool to assure domination and the ability to exploit those who worked" (p. 39). This statement too falls within the realm of *theoretical realism*. This idea is restated, repeated and developed throughout the entire length of the text (p. 41, p, 48). Worth mentioning is the catechistic-style format of the textbook, the main points being reaffirmed in a special box signaled by the phrase "TO BE REMEMBERED".

Yet the biggest innovation is undoubtedly the ultra-nationalistic tonality of the textbook rhetoric. The union of 1918 is presented as an ineluctable historical necessity, as "the climax of the struggle for unity and independence of the Romanian people in the Middle Ages" (p. 175). This statement is reinforced by showing that the achievement of unity "answered a historical necessity" (p. 176), being "an objective and necessary fact, as shall also be subsequent achievements" (p. 179), a fact that "history itself has confirmed" (p. 179) by the creation of the unitary national state in the modern ages.

The nationalist turn occurred in communist historiography was intensified by protochronism, *i.e.* the current of asserting the primacy of Romanian culture. The concept proved to have enormous potential, being perfectly compatible with the new ideological slew from internationalist Sovietism toward ethnocentric nationalism. To legitimate itself, the national communist regime resorted to nationalist ideology, and the Romanian primacy in all fields supported by protochronism has greatly contributed to the concreting of the system, compensating

for structural shortages with consoling mythical productions. In essence, protochronism set its programmatic objective as the discovery of the anticipations and anteriority of Romanian culture, which it succeeded. A single example: Mihai Eminescu ("the national poet of Romania") laid the scientific foundations of sociology, contributing decisively also to the development of political economy; moreover, Eminescu intuited in his literary work Einstein's theory of relativity (Tomiță, 2007: 111). In fact, the entire Western culture can be found prefigured *avant la lettre* in Romanian culture! The cultural pioneering excavated from the Romanian past reflected the greatness of the "bimilenary"[2] Romanian people.

In conclusion, the rise to power of N. Ceauşescu, along with the cooling of relation with Moscow and the launching of the Cultural Revolution redounded upon the representation of the past, which has undergone a radical reconfiguration surgery to put it in line with the new ideological imperatives, a phenomenon that I called mnemonic revolution.

The half of century in which the communist regime remained in power started with a strong pro-Soviet and anti-nationalist mnemonic revolution, reflected in the official textbook edited by M. Roller. Next, during the transition period from internationalist to nationalist policy, which overlapped with the rise to power of N. Ceauşescu, the historical discourse was an ambivalent one, coexisting heterogeneous elements that formed a non-integrated mixture. This shift can be labeled as a mnemonic reform. Ceauşescu's consolidation of power and the increased nationalism up to paroxysmal levels reached in the protochronist version, led to the escalation of the reform into a genuine mnemonic revolution. If the anti-nationalistic move carried out by Roller was a blow to collective memory, Ceauşescu-era major twist was a counter-shot by which societal memory has been repositioned on the firm foundation of nationalism. All this strategic maneuvers conducted from the center (which can be captured in the phrase "politics of memory") reveals the legitimizing potential held by societal memory.

After the institutional breakdown of the communist regime, the field of history production suffered a major restructuring process (Culic, 2005). The democratization of Romanian society brought multiperspectivism in conceptualizing the past. The monolithic and absolute image of the past promoted by the authoritarian regime shattered into relative viewpoints. This led to the liberalization of the *memory market* (*i.e.* the social space in which different cultural producers propose diverse retrospective projections about the past in order to obtain public support and credibility), caused by the withdrawal of monopoly over memory held by the totalitarian state. In the long process of opening a hermetically sealed society that characterized the transition to democracy, four directions followed

[2] In 1980 The Socialist Republic of Romania celebrated 2050 years since the foundation by Burebista of the first unitary state (Petre, 2010), regarded as a proto-Romanian state whose fulfillment was completed by the current state formation.

by historical discourses were crystallized: a) *the old guard*, which continued the line consecrated by communist historiography, with minimal adjustments; b) *the (quasi-) reformist direction*, which kept the nationalist ideology, but operated the necessary changes in order to adapt to the new democratic conditions; c) *the objective direction*, which got rid of nationalistic ideological load in the effort to take an equidistant perspective; d) a forth breach was opened toward a *postmodern discourse*, connected to the new critical current of western historiography. I argue that the collapse of communism did not produce a mnemonic revolution, but rather a reform that involved the dispersal of historical discourse into multiple directions covering a fairly wide range: from positions similar to those supported in the communist era up to postmodern nuances. Needless to say, this classification is made out of ideal types that cannot be found in empirical reality exactly in this configuration.

The first direction, the one that continued the discourse produced during national-communism, which I called "the old guard" (Almaş et al, 2004; Daicoviciu et al, 1997), prevailed especially until the introduction of alternative textbooks in 1999. The textbooks that fall into this category are characterized by the fact that historical discourse is almost identical to that of communist manuals. Exceptions are the sections that exalted the achievements of Romanian Communist Party, portions that have undergone an extirpation surgery. Likewise, the recognizable elements that could be easily associated with the former regime (the principle of class struggle, all the inventions related to slavery in Daco-roman social order etc.) were eliminated.

From the second class of textbooks, written in a quasi-reformist vein, belongs the manual entitled *History of Romanians from the oldest times until today* (2000). The type of reformist textbooks is characterized by the removal of Marxist-leninist principles, the preservation of the nationalistic discourse, and the inclusion of orthodox Christianity into the national meta-narrative. For example, the book opens with the statement "through their ancestors, *i.e.* Geto-Dacians, Romanians are one of the oldest people of Europe" (2000: 5). This proto-Romanization of Dacians performs a legitimizing function, since the argument of antiquity is mobilized in most textbooks addressed to primary school students. Several lines further, it is claimed that Romanians "were born Christians" (p. 5). Discussing the problem of Romanian ethnogenesis, the authors are supremely confident: the Romanian people have formed in the course of 6th and 7th centuries, and "the variety of historical sources clearly proves the groundlessness of imigrationist theories" (p. 12). This latter theory is thoroughly countered, completely rejected and forcefully refuted.

Another typical example is the textbook written in the same nationalist but de-communized interpretative key by M. Peneş and I. Troncotă (2000, 2006). First page is reserved for the national anthem "Awaken, Romanian!" followed by repeated attempts to inoculate feelings of national pride, a move qualified

as a manifestation of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995). Along with patriotic socialization through the injection of national values, students are informed that the Romanians "were born Christians" (p. 17).

The third ideal-typical textbook was characterized as being representative of the neutral, objective and ideologically decontaminated direction (at least in intent). The textbooks written from this perspective dropped the nationalist accents and chauvinist drifts. For example, the manual *History of Romanians* published in 2000 even begins with a manifesto that declares the adoption of a moderate and equidistant position, devoid of militant nationalistic excesses.

Finally, the historiographical discourse embedded in the alternative textbooks has also taken postmodernist nuances, notorious in this respect being the manual written by the team of Cluj historians coordinated by Sorin Mitu, published by Sigma Publishing House in 1999 under the title *History. Handbook for 12th grade*. The celebrity of the textbook was ensured by its prohibition by the Ministry of Education that reacted to pressures of "public opinion", after initially approving its publication. The unique position of this work in the landscape of Romanian history textbooks can be seen from its title that is to avoid the "retroactive nationalism" effect (*i.e.* the error of projecting the nationalist ideology of the two century way back in the past) the official phrase "History of Romania", or in the more diluted formula "History of Romanians" was reduced simply to "History". The relativist postmodern perspective from which the textbook was designed is explicitly assumed by the authors. Compared to historiographical orthodoxy expressed in "classical" textbooks, the rhetoric developed in this work represents a heresy, if not even a blasphemy to the official dogma promoted by the state. Instead of sanctifying the nation's past (as the traditional norm of historiography prescribes) the discourse developed in this textbook presents the nation's past as a mythohistorical tale assembled from both fictional and real material. The ethnogenesis of Romanian people – the tender spot of conventional historiography, which has demonstrated in an "irrefutable" manner the truth of the Daco-Roman continuity thesis – is treated as an "ethnogenetic myth" (p. 8). The abandonment of absolute certainties creative of legitimation and intellectual convenience characterizes the entire account, the authors not being reluctant to state that "we do not know much about the history of the centuries that followed" (p. 10). This attitude of recognizing uncertainty is a premiere in Romanian textbook history. Moreover, this work can be viewed as a counter-textbook, deliberately designed against the official dogma, the authors being well aware of the radical departure they undertook. For example, instead of conforming to the consecrated tradition of dismantling the immigrationist theories formulated by Austro-Hungarian historians concerning the ethnogenesis of Romanian people, the textbook invites readers to discover "how the story of Romanians origin sounds" (p. 8), entitling the chapter in question "The ethnogenesis: how the Romanian people *imagine* its origin" (p. 10). This was the statement that outraged the public trained in patriotic spirit, generating a wave of protests that ended with the censorship of the textbook:

"Like any myth of origins, the story of our nation formation, the result of marriages between Roman men and Dacian women, hide, despite its naïveté, a kernel of truth (p. 10). The authors relapse by supporting the "invention" of the modern nation, including the Romanian nation (p. 27). The argument advanced to sustain this heretical thesis assert that the Romanian nation was imagined by scholars of Transylvanian School of Blaj, followed by the romantic intellectuals who after constructing the ideational projection of Romanian nation state, have committed to the materialization of this belief by convincing the people from Wallachia, Transylvania, and Moldova that they share a common Romanianness (p. 40). This thesis shocks due to its clearly formulation: "in the first half of the nineteenth century the romantic intellectuals will 'invent' the modern Romanian nation, *i.e.* they will write a very embellished history, which emphasized the common origin and unity of all Romanians. They will develop grammars and dictionaries that would fix the literary correct language. Then, they will construct the nation's self-image" (p. 40). The authors do not sketch the slightest effort to sweeten the radicality of the discourse. At this point also the textbook strongly contrast with historiographical orthodoxy institutionalized in the school curriculum: rather than depicting Romanian nation in essentialist terms, as a fulfillment determined by historical necessity, the authors prefer instead a constructionist position, which allows for historical contingencies and implicitly the fragility of the national state (in opposition with the *eternalist* assumption of the conventional historiography). Another issue that came under critical fire was the textual-space management. The space allocated to classical figures (Mircea the Elder - *Mircea cel Bătrân* and Stephan the Great – *Ştefan cel Mare* are not even mentioned) is very small compared with the space reserved to television stars, contemporary fashionable public figures, and former presidents of Romania (Andreea Esca, Cristian Tudor Popescu, Ion Cristoiu, Ion Iliescu, Emil Constantinescu). Nothing in this regard has respected or complied with the tacitly and implicitly shared canons (which turns them into taken-for-granted norms and thereby more powerful) of the community of textbook history authors.

The cumulated effect of these vehemently reproaches led to the removal of the textbook from educational circuit, through the "withdrawal of the letter of advice" by the Ministry of Romanian Education, a euphemistic expression for banning, censorship and listing the textbook in the state compiled version of *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.

Conclusions

The objective of the content analysis of history textbooks was to test the terminological adequacy of the concepts of mnemonic revolution and mnemonic reform by searching for discursive ruptures in the evolution of the constructed image of the past. A first mnemonic revolution can be identified by occurring with the institutionalization of mandatory mass education. The next noticeable fracture in

the continuity of historiographical discourse occurred immediately after the seizure of power by the Communist Party by establishing a single official textbook developed by M. Roller in 1947, a handbook pigmented with strong pro-Sovietic and anti-nationalist tints. Then, de-Stalinization operated by Khrushchev had its repercussions in Romanian historiography. The outline of a mnemonic reform can be observed: the nationalist factor was reintroduced into the meta-narrative, a trend that has evolved in parallel with the sovietocentric orientation. In time, boosted by the twist toward nationalist-communism, the initial reform has sharpened, becoming a genuine mnemonic revolution. Very interesting is the fact that this shift occurred within the same system, being an *intrasystemic* revolution. The implosion of the communist regime doesn't generated a new mnemonic revolution, but a mnemonic reform dispersed in multiple directions, covering the entire spectrum from the superficial recycling of the old ethno-nationalistic vision to really innovative and challenging postmodernist interpretations.

The prohibitive intervention of Ministry of Education by which the counter-textbook was withdrawn from the school circuit demonstrates that the *memory market* formed after the breakdown of the authoritarian regime is only partially liberalized. The nation state is highly reactive to critical discourses that cast doubt on its foundational certainties and that afford to problematize the past by putting into question dogmatic formulas. Indexing the different perspectives violates the functioning principle of alternative textbook system, *i.e.* the principle of multiperspectivism. Through its institutions, the nation state continues to tightly control the image of the past, encouraging patriotic visions imbued with nationalistic ideology while screening out non-conformist discourses. Although it gave up on the official monopoly over memory, reserving to itself the role of providing the framework into which historians to build the representation of the past, the state continues to brutally debug the work of the professionals, operating as a repressive mechanism of control that protects its own legitimacy. By doing this, the nation state lays down the coordinates and the parameters of societal memory, dictating what can be remembered and what must be forgotten, and normatively indicating how the admitted past must be evoked.

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SOVIET PINS: SOUVENIRS AS SPOILS IN THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION

ALEX LEVANT*

ABSTRACT. In Moscow today, old Soviet pins, which had once been awarded to school kids as a rite of passage, are sold as souvenirs to tourists. These pins are an example of the many ruins of the Soviet Union that have experienced a metamorphosis: they connote an entirely new set of meanings that have supplanted their previous significance without any change in their material form. This article explores the transformation of these "cultural treasures" through the creative output of another Soviet "ruin": the post-Stalinist philosopher, Evald Ilyenkov, whose work challenged the hegemony of Soviet *Diamat*, but has not been adequately studied in the West.

Keywords: materialism, ideality, commodity fetishism, Ilyenkov, Benjamin

Introduction

> Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which current rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried in the procession. They are called "cultural treasures," and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment. For in every case these treasures have a lineage which he cannot con template without horror. They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great geniuses who created them, but also to the anonymous toil of others who lived in the same period. There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is never free of barbarism, so barbarism taints the manner in which it was transmitted from one hand to another. The historical materialist therefore dissociates himself from this process of transmission as far as possible. He regards it as his task to brush history against the grain (Benjamin, 1940: 391-392).

The triumphal procession continues today just as it had during the Roman era and in Walter Benjamin's time. Sometimes it happens in its classic form, as the plunder of cultural treasures in the wake of military conquest. Sometimes it appears in other, less recognizable, forms, like the purchase of souvenirs on a trip abroad. For tourists who go to Russia, these souvenirs can serve multiple functions, such as gifts or personal mementos of their trip. However, whatever function they end up serving, they must first be purchased; in every case, they always appear as commodities.

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Some of these souvenirs had a previous existence before they became commodities. For instance, consider the Soviet school pin. Prior to becoming a souvenir for foreign tourists it served an entirely different function, namely as a rite of passage for Soviet school children. This object experienced a fundamental shift in its meaning without any sensuously-perceptible changes to its material form. This transformation in its signification reflects a deeper social transformation – the decomposition of a set of social relations, a way of acting in the world, objectified in corresponding institutions, laws, and concepts, inscribed in material objects like statues, buildings, street names, and even school pins. Walking through the streets of Moscow fills one with the sense that they are in the midst of ruins of a fallen empire. Among the ruins are these souvenirs. In this way, Soviet pins can be thought of as spoils on display in the triumphal procession.

Digging through these ruins one can also find cultural treasures of a different type, treasures that have not been commodified, but instead have been left in the rubble. One of the most interesting treasures of this variety is the work of post-Stalinist Soviet philosopher, Evald Ilyenkov, who was part of a subterranean tradition of *creative* Soviet Marxism[1], which developed on the margins of, and in opposition to, official Soviet Marxism. Ilyenkov was a leader of a group of theorists who sought to break with Soviet *Diamat* during the Khrushchevite *thaw* – a courageous stand for which he lost his position and eventually was prevented from teaching.[2] He took his own life in 1979. Although he had a profound impact on a generation of Soviet philosophers, his work is only now becoming more widely read in the West.[3] His original conception of *ideal* phenomena can help us to analyse the transformation of these pins.

Combining these two ruins of the Soviet Union can be explosive, in part because of the actual journey of the Soviet pin, and in part because of Ilyenkov's theoretical insights, which can be used to retrieve a forgotten past. At issue here is the relationship between the pin as a material object, and the significance that it

[1] The term 'creative' [творческий] Soviet Marxism is used by some contemporary Russian theorists to distinguish certain currents in Marxist theory from 'official' Soviet Marxism in the form of *Diamat* (Maidansky, 2009: 201-202; Tolstykh, 2008: 10; Levant, 2008; Mezhuev, 1997). David Bakhurst uses the term 'genuine' (Bakhurst 1991: 3). This 'creative' Soviet Marxism could be found in various academic disciplines, most notably in the 1920s and 1960s. These currents are distinguished from official Soviet thought by their departure from positivist conceptions of subjectivity. However, a history that draws out the historical and theoretical connections between these currents, which articulates creative Soviet Marxism as a coherent tradition, is yet to be written.

[2] In 1954, as a junior lecturer at Moscow State University, Ilyenkov famously declared to the Chair of Dialectical Materialism that in Marxism there was no such thing as 'dialectical materialism' or 'historical materialism' (referring to *Diamat* and *Istmat*), but only a materialist conception of history. (Mareev, 2008: 8; Bakhurst, 1991: 6.)

[3] Despite Ilyenkov's impact within the Soviet Union (which remains a subject of ongoing debate), his insights have 'to this day remained a Soviet phenomenon without much international influence' (Oittinen, 2005a: 228).

assumes. How do we make sense of these two lives of the Soviet pin? What gives rise to these very different sets of meanings? When read through Ilyenkov, the metamorphoses of the Soviet pin can tell us much about the transformation of the society that produced it and the society in which it now exists.

Same object, different meaning

One of the first things that one finds striking about these pins is how different is their current significance as souvenirs from their former existence as school pins. Without any perceptible changes to their material form, these objects have assumed an entirely different set of meanings. The way we account for this shift in meaning is significant, and this is where Ilyenkov's work is interesting, as it offers some insights into the relationship between object and meaning that set him apart from other theorists whose views on the subject have been quite influential.[4]

Taking aim at what he called *neopositivism*, he sought to articulate an anti-reductionist, anti-essentialist, and anti-dualist[5] conception of the *ideal* (i.e., non-material phenomena, such as laws, customs, mathematical truths, concepts, and so on). Writing primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, his principal opponents were crude materialists who reduced the *ideal* to a mental phenomenon, a property of the physical brain.[6] However, he also distinguished his approach from theorists who identified the ideal with language, as he believed that these also suffered from reductionism.[7] In contrast, he offered a powerful and nuanced conception of the *ideal* informed by the German classical philosophical tradition, as well as the cultural-historical school of Soviet psychology, which includes figures such as L. Vygotsky, A. Luria, among others. For Ilyenkov, the ideal quality of a material object cannot be located in the material object itself, nor is it a projection onto the

[4] For example, in *Dialectics of the Ideal* (2009a), he takes direct aim at Heidegger, Husserl, and Popper as representatives of neopositivism in the West.

[5] Contemporary scholars have noted Ilyenkov's attempt to avoid Cartesian dualism by developing a Spinozist monist materialism in light of Marx. As contemporary Finnish philosopher, Vesa Oittinen writes, "Ilyenkov stresses the methodological value of Spinoza's monism, which means a change for the better compared with the dualism of two substances in Descartes […] The Cartesians had posed the whole question of the psycho-physical problem in a wrong way: they desperately sought to establish some kind of a causal relation between thought and extension, although such a relation simply doesn't exist. Thought and extension are simply two sides of the one and same matter", (Oittinen, 2005b: 323).

[6] For instance, one his principle opponents, I.I. Dubrovsky, wrote 'The ideal is a purely individual phenomenon, realised by means of a certain type of cerebral neurodynamic process' (Dubrovsky, 1971: 189).

[7] "Neopositivists, who identify thought (i.e. the ideal) with language, with a system of terms and expressions, therefore make the same mistake as scientists who identify the ideal with the structures and functions of brain tissue" (Ilyenkov, 2009b: 153).

material; rather, it is a form of human activity. This "activity approach" situates Ilyenkov in a theoretical current called "activity theory" for which he came to be known as the "philosophical mentor" (Bakhurst, 1991: 218).

The *ideal*, for Ilyenkov, is neither purely mental nor purely physiological; rather, it exists outside the individual and confronts her as a "special reality", as "all historically formed and socially legitimised *human representations* of the actual world […] 'things', in the body of which is tangibly *represented something other than themselves*" (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 14). This ideal plane of existence can be understood as the "intellectual culture of a given people", i.e., the state (in Hegel's and Plato's sense, as "the whole general ensemble of social institutions that regulate the life-activity of the individual") (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 15). Far from a mental phenomenon existing only in the minds of individuals, the ideal has an objective existence outside the individual, in which is reflected the material world. But the ideal has a "peculiar objectivity" in the sense that it exists only in the context of human activity. In the absence of human activity, there can be no ideal.[8]

The ideal has an objective existence in human activity – in the process of creating ideal representations of the material world, and the reverse process in which these representations inform human activity. "The ideal form is a form of a thing, but outside this thing, namely in man [sic], as a form of his dynamic life-activity, as goals and needs. Or conversely, it is a form of man's dynamic life-activity, but outside man, namely in the form of the thing he creates, which represents, reflects another thing, including that which exists independently of man and humanity. 'Ideality' as such exists only in the constant transformation of these two forms of its 'external incarnation' and does not coincide with either of them taken separately" (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 44).

From this perspective, the significance of an object arises only as it is brought into the orbit of a system of meanings that informs human activity. It is understood as part of a process that cannot be grasped in isolation from the object itself or from the activity into which it is put to use. "Since man [sic] is given the external thing in general only insofar as it is involved in the process of his activity, in the final product – in the idea – the image of the thing is always merged with the image of the activity in which this thing functions. *That constitutes the epistemological basis of the identification of the thing with the idea, of the real with the ideal*" (Ilyenkov, 2009b: 162). In this way, the meaning of the Soviet pin emerged out of the function it served in both societies.

[8] This is one of the distinguishing features between Ilyenkov's concept of the ideal and Popper's concept of World 3. However, as Guseinov and Lektorsky write, 'The substantive difference lay in the fact that, for Ilyenkov, ideal phenomena can exist only within the context of human activity.' (Guseinov and Lektorsky, 2009: 15.)

The value-form and the ideal form

When the Soviet pin becomes a souvenir for tourists it assumes the form of a commodity. The commodification of the pin fundamentally transforms it as it acquires a quality it had not previously possessed: it acquires value. One of the great insights of Marx's concept of the value-form is the notion that an object in the form of a commodity becomes a bearer of the value-form, the socially-necessary labour time typically required for its production.

These pins, however, were not produced as commodities; they acquired the form of commodities as a result of their subsequent commodification, following the collapse of the Soviet state. The logic of their production was entirely different from their current existence. Moreover, their value as Soviet souvenirs have nothing in common with the labour-time required for their production. However, Marx may yet be useful here if we examine another aspect of the value-form that may be even more important, and certainly more applicable to an analysis of commodities such as the Soviet pin.

In his most original work, *Dialectics of the Ideal* (2009a), our other "cultural treasure", Evald Ilyenkov, argues that Marx's conception of the value-form carries a deeper philosophical insight: what is most significant about the value-form is not its quantitative content, but that it is ideal in its essence – it has no material properties, it is suprasensuous. For instance, the value-form of gold cannot be found in its substance, in its physical or chemical properties. It is an ideal property that is attributed to gold.

But it is not simply a mental projection onto gold; rather, according to Marx the value-form has an existence that is independent of the individual mind, namely value is congealed labour, human activity embodied in the form of a commodity. The value-form of gold is the socially-necessary labour time required for its acquisition, extraction, production, etc. It is a form of activity that exists independently of the individual mind. The value-form confronts the individual with an objectivity similar to material objects.

Ilyenkov illustrates this point brilliantly by revisiting Kant's example of "real" and "ideal" talers. Recall how Kant sought to demonstrate that the presence of something in one's mind does not mean that this thing *actually* exists. He illustrated his point by noting the difference between having "ideal" talers in one's mind and "real" talers in one's pocket. This distinction might appear self-evident; however, Ilyenkov notes how Marx mused what would happen to Kant with his "real" talers were he to find himself in a country where talers had no value? His real talers would become different objects without any changes to their material form. It appears that value has an objective existence outside the mind of the individual, yet it does not reside in the object itself.

Ilyenkov sees Marx's insight about the relationship between the value-form and the material form of the commodity as an example of the relationship between the ideal in general and the material in general. For him, what is most significant is not that the value-form is a reflection of socially-necessary labour-time, but that it is a reflection of labour more broadly, labour as activity, and most-significantly, that this form is entirely independent of the material properties of the object in which it temporarily "dwells" (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 21). He reminds us that according to Marx, the value-form of a commodity is purely ideal – it has no material properties, and it bears absolutely no relationship to the material properties of the commodity itself.[9] "This is a purely universal form, completely indifferent to any sensuously perceptible material of its 'incarnation' [воплощения], of its 'materialisation'. The value-form is absolutely independent of the characteristics of the 'natural body' of the commodity in which it "dwells" [вселяется], the form in which it is *represented*." The value-form is, for Ilyenkov, an illustration of the ideal form in general.

In light of Ilyenkov's work, we can see how the ideal form of the pin changes without any changes to its material form. Its ideal form changes because it is brought into a different system of meanings and a different system of practices. As the pin is commodified it loses its ideal form as a school pin and assumes the commodity form as a souvenir. In place of its former set of meanings, it acquires value.

The animation of the commodity and commodity relations

The transformation of the Soviet pin from being a rite of passage for Soviet children to being a souvenir for tourists signals a fundamental change in social relations. If the pin as a rite of passage was a sign of a certain social order that mediated the relations between its members, then the pin as a commodity is a sign of a different social order that mediates their relations in a new way. One distinctive aspect of this new form of mediation is the central role of the commodity.

A society mediated by commodity relations differs from all other societies. Because the class of producers is atomized, production is geared for exchange, and all products assume the form of commodities. Since they must be exchanged before they can be used, they first appear in value-form, which is always measured in terms of other commodities. This way of integrating objects into a system of social practices produces this reductive signification, their signification as value. In a society mediated by commodity relations, objects lose their qualitative differences and come to be seen primarily in terms of their quantitative "worth".

[9] Marx mocks political economists who identify the value-generating quality of capital with the object in which it is represented, as opposed to human activity: "It becomes a property of money to generate value and yield interest, much as it is an attribute of pear trees to bear pears." (Lukacs, 1923: 86).

In addition to this reductionism of the world of things, a society mediated by commodity relations is also distinguished by an inversion between producer and product, where the product comes to dominate the producer. This product is not only the sum of the actual things that are produced, but also the *ideal* product, the process of production, which is likewise produced and reproduced.[10] Commodity relations reflect a process of production that is out of control of the producers, a process that dominates the producers. Independent producers who are free from each other's control as to what and how to produce find themselves dependent on the relations between their commodities – i.e., on the market.[11] Because they produce independently of each other, their relations become mediated by relations between their commodities, by the market in which they are exchanged – the world of commodities.

What is most significant about this form of mediation is its autonomy from, and dominance over, the people whose relations it mediates. Marx tried to grasp this phenomenon with his concept of commodity fetishism.

> It is absolutely clear that, by his activity, man [sic] changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless the table continues to be wood, an ordinary, sensuous thing. But as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will (Marx, 1906: 163-164).

This will is a product of the fetishism of ordinary things when they become commodities. These things, as commodities, come to be worshipped, and achieve a certain autonomy from their producers. Moreover, they become the cell-form (Marx, 1977: 12) of an organism called capital, which comes to dominate its creator in a manner reflected in various ideal representations, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to more recent cinematic representations like the *Terminator*.

To be clear, the Soviet pin as a rite of passage is no less "straightforward" a thing than it is in the form of a commodity; however, their fetishism differs. While it can be said that the pin in both forms stands above its producer, one

[10] Ilyenkov insists that this is precisely how Marx understood the process of idealization: as "the process by which the *material* life-activity of social man [sic] begins to produce not only a material, but also an *ideal* product, begins to produce the act of *idealisation* of reality (the process of transforming the "material" into the "ideal"), and then, having arisen, the "ideal" becomes a critical component of the material life-activity of social man, and then begins the opposite process – the process of the *materialisation* (objectification, reification, "incarnation") of the ideal." (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 18).

[11] "The owners of commodities therefore find out, that the same division of labour that turns them into independent private producers, also frees the social process of production and the relations of the individual producers to each other within that process, from all dependence on the will of those producers, and that the seeming mutual independence of the individuals is supplemented by a system of general and mutual dependence through or by means of the products" (Marx, 1906: 121).

must differentiate the order of alienation in each case. It can be said that both, the Soviet worker and the worker under capitalism, had been alienated from the product of their labour. However, there is a fundamental difference between the two, which has to do with the fact that the Soviet pin had been produced with a particular use in mind, while a commodity is produced for the single purpose of being sold (its use is only important insofar as it facilitates its sale). While the worker may be alienated in each case, Soviet production was directed by the planning of various decision-making bodies, but commodity production is directed by an atomized class of capitalists whose activity is largely coordinated by the market.

The role played by the market is vital to understanding the difference between the fetishism of the pin as a commodity and its fetishism as a rite of passage. Recall that, "Objects of utility become commodities only because they are the products of the labour of private individuals who work independently of each other" (Marx, 1906: 165). Independent producers form a market, which comes to dominate the whole production process. The use-value of ordinary products becomes locked in a shell of value, because all commodities must be exchanged before they can be used. Consequently, commodities come to be seen as something other than products of human labour. A forgetting occurs when a product becomes a commodity: it sheds the source of its production and becomes reborn as an animated being which lives in a web of relations with other commodities. As a commodity, the Soviet pin is no longer fetishised for its use-value, but for its value; it becomes fetishised as part of a new form of life buoyed up by the market.

Commodity fetishism is also much more pervasive in its scope and depth. The process of commodification seeks to transform all aspects of life into the form of a commodity. Consequently, commodity fetishism is much more "effective" than the fetishism of Soviet ideological products in mediating human relations. Indeed, it is rare to have a human interaction under capitalism without it being mediated by a relation between commodities.

The fact that commodity fetishism played a much smaller role and existed differently in Soviet production indicates that human relations existed in a fundamentally different way. Although both the Soviet and 'Western' working classes had been alienated from the product of their labour, in the USSR this alienation had not penetrated individual relationships to the same extent and in the same way. While in the 'West' the working class is atomized, this process had not penetrated the Soviet working class to the same extent because commodities had not mediated their relations like in the 'West'. Ideological products, like Soviet school pins, interpellated people as members of a community-in-the-making, not as bearers of commodities in a market.

This difference comes into sharp relief when different *ideals* come into direct contact and are seen directly against each other. For a moment both ideals become visible in a new way. As Jonathan Flatley recounts, this juxtaposition was quite common following the immediate collapse of the Soviet state:

> In 1993, there was still a grotesque (in the formal poetic sense) juxtaposition of old Soviet spaces with newly "capitalist" or "Western" ones. At the time, Aleksander Ivanov and I took the opportunity to write a little about the strangeness of the moment. We noted that what was remarkable about that Moscow was not so much the *existence* of "Western" signifiers, but that they appeared next to and within Soviet spaces and sign-systems. Indeed, the photo-journalists for the local English language newspaper, *The Moscow Times*, rarely missed the chance to exploit the seemingly endless supply of visual ironies: a Coca-Cola kiosk set in front of a constructivist style mural with the slogan "We Are Building Communism," or the young entrepreneur selling posters of Rambo and soap opera stars in the metro under a huge marble mural of Lenin. These incongruities had a curious effect: just as commodity fetishism here seemed unfamiliar and even absurd, so too properly Soviet spaces – like the Metro or state stores or even Red Square itself – also acquired a new face. […] Like any space that organizes one's perceptions (like ideology itself), totalitarian space must be *invisible* to function (Flatley, 1999: 3).

The image from Photo 1. exemplifies this effect: a large billboard on Arbat St. advertising Winston cigarettes, depicting an aerial view of a seaside resort with an eagle apparently flying out of the ad and the words 'Complete Freedom' along the bottom. Next to this ad, a plaque to commemorate Soviet soldiers in WWII. This contrast created the effect that Flatley had observed, however, the Soviet plaque was only there during the Victory Day celebrations in May and was subsequently replaced by an ad for the youth Olympics in July, while the Winston ad had become a permanent fixture.

Photo 1. Advertising on Arbat street, Moscow, 1998. Author's photo

As the pin acquires the form of a commodity, it is removed from the Soviet ideal and integrated into the market. It becomes animated as part of a different ideal. In this new ideal, the pin joins the ranks of commodities, which mediate social relations.

Emptying out the ideal-form

The fetishism that accompanies the commodification of the Soviet pin animates it as a commodity, but simultaneously, it also destroys its sacredness as a Soviet rite of passage, it empties out its ideal form. The fact that production under capitalism is the production of commodities means that no individual products are given special status aside from their value-form. Every commodity has a price. Thus, while all products are animated, no single product is sacred.

This sacrilege is significant because it performs a necessary operation for capitalism to function: the exorcism of the producer from the product. Consider Michael Taussig's claim: "In precapitalist economies the embodiment of the producer in the product is consciously acknowledged, but in a capitalist system it is essential that this embodiment be 'exorcised'" (Taussig, 1980: 28). Under capitalism the producer is alienated from the product of her labour. Not only does she not keep what she makes, but she is not to think of her product as something that she makes; instead, what she makes is money in the form of her wage. In contrast, Taussig cites Marcel Mauss' study of Maori exchange, where there is "the belief that an article that is produced and exchanged contains the life-force (hau) of the person and objects in nature from whence the article derived" (Taussig, 1980: 28). However, under conditions of capitalist production, the 'life-force' of the producer is purged from the product.

This exorcism occurs because the production of commodities is geared for exchange, not use. Since commodities must be exchanged before they can be used, the relations of exchange among the commodities (i.e. the market) dominate what is produced. Thus, as we saw above, there is a reversal of the direction of the control of the production process from the producer to the products of her making. Consequently, the products that are made under such conditions are 'lifeless'; that is, they do not embody the life-force of their producer. Instead, these products are animated by the commodity form, which is plugged into the electricity grid of the market, itself ultimately powered by the labour of its producers.

Similarly, when the Soviet pin is commodified, it is purged of the life-force of its producers. This is not the exorcism of its immediate producers, but of the society of producers, it is the emptying out of the Soviet *ideal*. As the pin leaves the system of practices that produced the Soviet ideal, as those practices disappear, the pin becomes hollowed out. If it had once signified a rite of passage,

when it sits in the market with a price tag it appears as an ornament, which confirms the exorcism of the Soviet ideal from its material form. Recall that Lukacs noted Marx's observation that commodities do not originate within communities, but on their borders. "That is where barter begins, and from here it strikes back into the interior of the community, decomposing it" (Taussig, 1980: 85). We can observe the decomposition of Soviet society in the commodification of this pin.

This notion illuminates a process by which Soviet artefacts become "de-Sovietized". The Soviet past is a site of struggle whose configuration is key to maintaining the hegemony of the new elite. This involves the erasure of Soviet achievements, as well as the identification of "democratization" with "anti-communism". More generally, it means reconstructing its history from the perspective of the dispossessed bourgeoisie, and the silencing of other voices and other histories. However, in addition to these deliberate efforts by ideologists, this transformation of the past is also achieved by the above process, whose ideological effects are not deliberate, but are nevertheless real.

Recall the similarities and the differences between Marx's concept of ideology and his concept of commodity fetishism. In contrast to some contemporary notions of ideology, which understand it as a perspective or as a world-view, Marx identified it as a practice that occludes social relations (Marx, 1970: 67). This is a powerful concept, which continues to be used by contemporary sociologists.[12] However, in *Capital*, he drops this concept and examines the impact of other practices on consciousness, including commodification. The production of commodities also produces an *ideal* product, which involves their fetishism. This process helps us to understand how de-Sovietization happens on a level beyond overt ideological struggles, but as a consequence of a new organization of human activity, as a product of a new set of practices.

The war veteran who sells his medal to tourists outside Izmailovski market best illustrates this transformation. Possession of this war medal no longer signifies a special honour for defending the Soviet Union, but its opposite – a sign of Soviet defeat in the Cold War. Benjamin's "historical materialist" contemplates such a "cultural treasure" with horror for two reasons: first of all, because of the "anonymous toil" of its producers, but also because of "the manner in which it was transmitted from one hand to another". The second horror that the historical materialist experiences is the horror of defeat, it is the horror of the destruction of a way of life.

This horror stems from the underside of civilization, its other: barbarism. As Fredric Jameson writes, "throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror" (Jameson, 1991: 5). The dialectical nature of civilization and barbarism is a significant theme in the Marxist tradition. While

[12] For instance, see Bannerji, 2011.

Marx saw a "civilizing" moment in capitalism, he insisted that capitalist production always begins with the forced separation of people from their means of subsistence (Marx, 1977: 875). He shows that as capitalist production develops, as people are "civilized", they simultaneously become more barbaric due to the estrangement of their activity. Most significantly, they lose human influence over the production of the *ideal* to the market. Ilyenkov attributes the phenomenon of idealist philosophy to alienation rather than faulty thinking: because people become alienated from their means of making the world, they become alienated from the world that they make. Their world comes to resemble Hobbes' state of nature, of a war of all against all. Appearing as nature is what Lukacs called *second nature* – a world where social relations appear as things, and therefore as immutable, given and "natural" (Lukacs, 1923: 83).

Brushing history against the grain

Benjamin contrasts the historicist, who views these souvenirs as "cultural treasures", with the historical materialist, who "dissociates himself from this process of transmission as far as possible." Yet historical materialists (including Benjamin), often collect these "cultural treasures", despite their horrific origin(s). One is faced with the question of how to relate to these documents of culture and barbarism, these spoils in the triumphal procession?

Benjamin invites the historian to grasp "the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one" and to stop "telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary" (Lukacs, 1923: 263). From this perspective, the present is not the culmination of a sequence of events, but the past is a "constellation" of events that have been ordered in light of present concerns. This "Copernican revolution" (Benjamin, 1999: 388-389) approaches the past as a contested terrain that is produced in the present. Taken separately, these events have no singular meaning; rather, their significance arises out of their role in the "constellation" that is made according to present concerns. This insight is captured in the wisdom of the popular joke: "In Russia nothing is more difficult to predict than the past" (Van der Zweerde, 2009: 178). It also recalls the relationship between the significance of a material object and the system of practices in which it moves. In fact, Ilyenkov likewise makes reference to the stars to illustrate this, very similar, relationship. "Thus at first he directs his attention upon the stars exclusively as a natural clock, calendar and compass as means and instruments of his life-activity, and observes their 'natural' properties and regularities only insofar as they are natural properties and regularities of the material in which his activity is being performed" (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 44). In this way, Soviet pins are themselves contested terrains, whose meaning, like the past itself, is difficult to predict.

At stake here is obviously much more than the meaning of Soviet pins, or "cultural treasures" more generally, but the very present itself because the ideal is not only the phenomenon that enables the individual to acquire meaning, but it is the very phenomenon that produces the human individual. In other words, one's sense of self – what often appears in popular culture as a natural, pre-social individual, an automatic product of our biology, of our human brain in particular – requires the presence of an *ideal* that exists in social practices within which the individual becomes self-aware, and in the absence of which no sense of self or human consciousness would emerge. Ilyenkov describes the ideal "as the *universal norms of that culture* within which an individual awakens to conscious life" (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 5). His rationale for the necessity of the ideal for the emergence of individual consciousness: "Consciousness and will become necessary forms of mental activity only where the individual is compelled to control his own organic body in answer not to the organic (natural) demands of this body but to demands presented from outside, by the 'rules' accepted by the society in which he was born. It is only in these conditions that the individual is compelled to distinguish himself from his own organic body. These rules are not passed on to him by birth, through his 'genes', but are imposed upon him from outside, dictated by culture, and not by nature" (Ilyenkov, 2009a: 38-39).

This line of argument was developed on the margins of Soviet philosophy in the 1960s in response to official Soviet *Diamat*; however, it is closely related to the "activity approach" that had emerged in Soviet psychology, particularly in the work of Lev Vygotsky (another cultural treasure, which has been much more thoroughly studied in the West than Ilyenkov).[13] Vygotsky offers an anti-essentialist approach to human consciousness in the sense that consciousness does not develop spontaneously along with the development of the human brain in the body of a child, but that consciousness is in its essence a social product. In Vygotsky's account, children develop "higher mental functions" as they acquire speech; that is, as they internalize the system of signs that they inhabit. Vygotsky writes, "The system of signs restructures the whole psychological process and enables the child to master her movement" (Vygotsky, 1978: 35). From the perspective of "activity theory", the 'higher mental functions' and 'meaningful perception' that are associated with human consciousness do not arise from the brain itself, but must be *acquired* by the child with the help of her brain, and that in the absence of this acquisition, the child would not develop a genuinely human consciousness.[14]

[13] A number of theorists have noted Vygotsky's influence on Ilyenkov; for instance, Bakhurst, 1991, Mareev, 2008, among others.

[14] As another "creative" Soviet Marxist put it in a very different context: "Individual consciousness in not the architect of the ideological superstructure, but only a tenant lodging in the social edifice of ideological signs" (Voloshinov, 1929: 13).

From this perspective, what is at stake in the struggle over meaning is the present and the future – it is the production of the individual, the type of person that is produced. In post-Soviet Russia, social relations are becoming mediated in new ways, particularly by commodities, which are becoming more and more prevalent, though fewer and fewer people can afford them. Older people are finding themselves in a nihilistic and decaying society, while a new generation is growing up, relating to each other through commodities. For instance, consider the following scene:

> Zoya told me how her friend Katya, a divorced mother and teacher, lost her nine-year-old son. She makes about $125 a month. The son stole the equivalent of $18 from her. When she confronted him, he said he was going to go live with his father and his grandparents, since his father has a car and makes good money, while she's just a poor teacher. He called his grandmother and admitted taking the money, but said he needed it for things, like a gas pistol. And he left. A few days later he called his mother, explaining that if she made more money, he could live with her. Katya's in shock; she can't understand where this monster appeared from. Actually, one could say he's well-socialized into the new value-system (Mandel, 1998: 92).

This monster is the fruit of the new value-system, which is the *ideal* aspect of a new system of practices, a new set of social relations.

"Brushing history against the grain", then, cannot simply amount to the orientation of an individual toward these cultural treasures. The point is not to step out of the present, but to change it by retrieving a forgotten past. The Soviet pin appears not only a social artefact that reflects its society, but it also becomes a palimpsest on which another ideal had been recorded. Just beneath the "surface" of the ideal form of the pin is evidence of another ideal. As the pin sits in the market with a price tag, as a cultural treasure on display in the triumphal procession, it continues to haunt.

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CHANGING VIEWS OF THE PAST: STRUCTURAL AND CONTEXTUAL DETERMINANTS OF RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIALISM

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ABSTRACT. This project builds on my earlier work on "Structural Determinants and Retrospective Assessment of Socialism" (2007 in Slomczynski and Marquart-Pyat, eds.), where I analyzed for the period 1989-2003, whether Poles' views of the past and changes thereof depend on their social position before and after 1989. Here, I extend the scope of this research along three lines: first, I bring in new data from the 2008 Polish Panel Survey, POLPAN; second, I include the relation between contextual determinants – individuals' political biographies – and subjective assessment of socialism; third, I complement the quantitative part of my analyses with in-depth interview data. I conceptualize evaluations of the past in terms of the degree of positive/negative assessment of the socialist system. This specific reference point is essential for my study since "socialist system" represents an abandoned regime. Thus, change in opinion about socialism is not caused by the change in its object; it might be caused only by the change in the subject – a person and their conditions. Findings support the rational action perspective that assessment of socialism is based on individual interests that are well grounded in peoples' position in the social structure. In Poland, 'winners' of the transition such as mangers and experts who prior to 1989 used to appraise socialism more positively than any other groups, denounce the past as they recognize, and are able to take advantage of, the opportunities that post-communism opened. 'Losers' of the transition – manual workers and farmers – who used to be most outspoken against the socialist rule while it was in power, become first in evaluating the past positively, as they bear an unequal share of the transition costs. Individuals' political experiences of the Communist Party also shape memories of socialism.

Keywords: retrospective assessment of socialism, public opinion change, social class, political biography, Polish Panel Survey POLPAN, qualitative data

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Introduction[1]

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE, hereafter) two observations about the communist past deserve a closer look: first, people remember the historical experience of communism differently; second, in the past two decades after 1989, people have repeatedly changed their views about socialism.

Understanding how people assess a system that came to an end is important for two main reasons. The first pertains to the role of history in the functioning of society. This is a well-taken point in general, and especially for countries like Poland, where dealing with the socialist period involves the additional component of the 1989 regime change that occurred without a clear-cut break with the past. As a result, long after the transformation, "unresolved issues" of the communist era continue to riddle Polish society (Castle and Taras 2002). Second, examining public opinion of socialism and its determinants opens up a testing ground for more general attitudes toward the emerging economic and political structures, such as the relation between references to the past and attitudes on state-paternalism. State paternalism represents a main feature of the communist rule, and refers to the state's responsibility to provide social welfare and economic security: in socialism, the party-state ought to guarantee jobs, subsidize housing and basic food, transportation and medical care (Shabad and Slomczynski, in Slomczynski ed.2000). On theoretical grounds, then, having a favorable attitude toward socialism would imply state paternalistic attitudes as well. Another interesting link is that between evaluations of the past and prospective orientations.

In this paper I use the Polish Panel Survey POLPAN and insights from qualitative interviews to analyze whether Pole's view of the socialist regime depend on their social position and their pre-1989 political biographies. I argue that this relationships should be informative for CEE countries more generally, given similar macro-level conditions and the wide-ranging theoretical framework.

Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses

Structural effects

Studies of the consequences of the 1989 systemic change in CEE demonstrate that the costs and benefits of the socio-economic and political restructuring have been distributed differently across social groups, justifying the distinction

[1] I wish to thank Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and colleagues at the First International Conference of the Society of Sociologists from Romania (December 2010, Cluj-Napoca) for their useful comments. All usual disclaimers apply. This paper is a continuation of research published as "Structural Determinants of Retrospective Assessments of Socialism" in *Continuity and Change in Social Life: Structural and Psychological Adjustment in Poland*, Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and Sandra Marquart-Pyatt Eds, Warsaw: IFIS Publishers, 2007.

between 'winners' and 'losers' of the transition. Generally, mangers, experts and the new class of employers have taken advantage of the business opportunities that the post-1989 environment opened, and the *nomenklatura* has been fairly successful in translating some of its political capital into economic advantages (Rona-Tas 1994, Mach 2000 in K. Slomczynski ed.). Manual workers and farmers on the other hand, have been strongly hit by the downsides of privatization, such as down-closing and/or downsizing of state-run enterprises, inflation and withdrawal of state subsidies. They are disproportionately in the 'losers' camp. Moreover, as post-1989 Poland illustrates, those whose position in the socialist social structure had been at a relatively high level during socialism, now experience the disadvantages of transition (Heyns 2005, Domanski 1996, Slomczynski 2000, Slomczynski 2002).

These findings, together with research showing that in CEE structural variables strongly affect how people react to social and political transformations (Rose, Mischler and Haerpfer 1998; Slomczynski and Marquart-Pyatt, Eds. 2007), warrant the assumption that subjective attitudes toward socialism will depend on the actual and potential gains and losses stemming from one's social position. Rational choice and self-interest theories provide good insights into why marked social inequality in post-communist societies would affect public opinion about socialism:[2] different people will evaluate the past positively based on individual interests that are well-grounded in their structural location. Of course, idiosyncratic attitudes/approaches can occur, but as the group size increases, these tend to cancel each other out, allowing for attitudinal, and finally, predictions of actions at the aggregate level (Hechter and Kanazawa 1998 p. 194).

Positions in the social structure have been conceptualized differently: as occupational groups within the class paradigm (Goldthorpe and Hope 1974; Goldthorpe 1980; Wright 1989), and as socioeconomic status (hierarchical continuum) within the status attainment paradigm (Blau and Duncan 1967; Treiman 1976; Ganzeboom, de Graf, and Treiman 1992). In this paper, which regards the distinction between class structure and social stratification to be justified both at the theoretical and at the empirical level (see Slomczynski and Shabad, 1997; Slomczynski, 2000, for detailed discussions on the relevance of class), the research hypotheses concerning the impact of structural variables are formulated in terms of individuals' class location.

[2] Goldthorpe (1998) and Boudon (2003) propose a rational action perspective that focuses on subjective rationality (i.e. that "treats as rational both holding beliefs and acting on these beliefs where actors have good reasons for doing so" Goldthorpe 1998 p. 179), that has requirements of intermediate strength, that is situational (i.e. concerned with the formation of subjectively rational beliefs) and that does not claim generality. In this version, the cognitive theory of action (Boudon's 2003) circumvents the main problems that rational choice is usually criticized for, namely: reducing all rationality to instrumental rationality, not accounting for personal preferences, and the risk of becoming tautological (Goldthorpe 1998, Boudon 2003).

Hypothesis 1: 'Winners' of the post-communist transition (employers, managers & experts) should change their opinion about socialism from positive to negative.

Hypothesis 2: 'Losers' of the transition (workers, farmers, the unemployed, & pensioners) should move from a negative evaluation of the former regime to a positive one.

Contextual effects

I concentrate on the property of the social context to link individual level characteristics to structural properties through social interaction and socialization processes (Erdbring and Young 1979, Sprague 1982). From this perspective, contextual effects on evaluation of the past should operate through attributes of aggregates of individuals - in this case, their political biographies.

Political socialization research (Jennings 2002, Sapiro 2004) calls attention to the importance of "generation units" – that is, "the different relationships people from a single generation had with the original event" (Sapiro 2004, p.11) – for explaining variation in attitudes/behaviors among people belonging to same generations. For the communist countries of Europe, this thesis should have clearly observable manifestations, given the divergent patterns of individuals' political biographies, i.e. their participation in political organizations and collective action through time. In Poland, where *Solidarność* (Solidarity) members and members of the ruling communist party, the Polish United Workers' Party (hereafter, CP), took opposing positions toward government and its ideology, subjective assessment of socialism should vary significantly by organizational involvement, above and beyond the impact of social structure, gender and age.

Hypothesis 3: Members of *Solidarność* (Solidarity) will be less likely than other Poles to make positive assessments of the socialist regime, including after 1989.

Hypothesis 4: CP membership increases the likelihood of evaluating the socialist regime in positive terms, including after 1989.

Structural determinants and contextual effects are complementary explanations for evaluation of the past and changes thereof.

Data and Methods

For this project I employ two types of data. The core of my analyses involves the Polish Panel Survey, POLPAN, administered and supported by the Polish Academy of Sciences. In this survey a representative sample of Poles was interviewed in 1988 and re-interviewed in 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008. The 1988

random sample consisted of 5,817 men and women ages twenty-one to sixty-five years. The 1993 wave was based on a random sample of 2,500 respondents from the 1988 wave. For the next waves (1998, 2003, and 2008) the same people were followed, and samples of new cohorts were included. I perform most of the statistical analyses on the 1988-2008 panel, that is, on the subsample of respondents who participated in all five waves (N = 938 respondents, aged 46 – 84 years in 2008).

POLPAN aims to observe social structure and its change during the post-communist transformation in Poland. Thus, the questionnaire includes extensive batteries of questions on political attitudes, including the subjective assessment of the socialist system. On this topic, the questionnaire item asks: "Do you think that the socialist system brought to the majority of people in Poland: (1) gains only, (2) more gains than losses, (3) as many gains as losses, (4) more losses than gains, or (5) losses only?" Since I am interested in a clear-cut distinction between evaluations on the past, I regroup the five-choice answer into three categories: *positive assessment* of socialism, comprised of "gains only," and "more gains than losses"; *neutral assessment*, corresponding to "as many gains as losses"; and *negative assessment*, which includes "more losses than gains," and "losses only." For the present analyses, I treat the POLPAN data as cross-sectional, and use logistic regression for particular time points.

In-depth interviews constitute the second source of information. I interviewed 19 people in Poland who have experienced both the communist regime and the post-communist transition, who were at least 18 years old in 1989 and with a relevant occupationional and/or central position in various networking structures. In selecting respondents, I relied on personal referrals and the snowball sample technique. The interview consisted of open-ended questions that allowed respondents to express their opinions with minimal interference from the interviewer. All responses were tape recorded and were accompanied by extensive field notes. At the completion of the interview, I administered a brief survey covering demographics and basic questions on the respondent's political engagement prior to and after 1989.[3]

Findings

Previous analyses on POLPAN 1988–2003 (Tomescu-Dubrow in Slomczynski and Marquart-Pyatt, Eds. 2007) showed overall stability in public opinion on socialism accompanied by significant changes at the individual level. Table 1 presents the distribution of assessment of socialism including the 2008 data as well.

[3] The interview guide is available upon request.

Table 1. Distribution of Assessment of Socialism in 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008

Year	Assessment of socialism*					*N* = 100%
	three categories			five categories		
	positive (%)	neutral (%)	negative (%)	mean	SD	
	Full samples					
1988	27.1	49.0	23.9	3.064	0.851	5,817
1993	29.3	37.0	33.7	2.941	0.917	2,258
1998	31.2	35.9	32.9	2.984	0.960	2,133
2003	36.3	33.1	30.6	3.032	0.975	1,631
2008	21.8	44.6	33.6	2.876	0.882	1,470

* **Note:** Analyses are carried out on the full samples of each respective wave.

Two points stand out, First, while a considerable part of adult Poles expresses positive attitudes toward the socialist regime, 2008 registers a break with the rise observed during the 1993-2003 period. Secondly, negative opinions of the socialist regime remain largely stable for the post-communist period. The means and standard deviations calculated for the five-category measure of assessment of socialism also show that the overall distribution of answers is relatively stable across time with respect to central tendency and distributional variation.

Table 2. Changes in Assessment of Socialism in the Periods 1988–1993, 1993–1998, 1998–2003, and 2003-2008

Assessment of socialism	Assessment of Socialism[a]			*N* = 100%
	positive (%)	neutral (%)	negative (%)	
In 1988	Changes in 1988–1993[b]			
Positive	38.8	37.2	24.0	363
Neutral	27.5	40.4	32.1	582
Negative	23.4	34.6	42.0	295
In 1993	Changes in 1993–1998[c]			
Positive	50.5	31.4	18.1	370
Neutral	29.0	45.8	25.2	472
Negative	22.1	27.4	50.5	398
In 1998	Changes in 1998–2003[d]			
Positive	57.6	24.3	18.1	403
Neutral	39.5	43.3	17.2	430
Negative	22.3	28.6	49.1	381
In 2003	Changes in 2003–2008[e]			
Positive	38.5	44.2	17.3	371
Neutral	20.7	54.4	24.8	294
Negative	13.8	26.0	60.2	254

[a] Changes are examined on the panel sample 1988-2003 for the first 3 periods, and 1988-2008 for 4th period.

[b] Gamma[4] = 0.215; [c]Gamma = 0.396; [d]Gamma = 0.431; [e]Gamma = 0.478

[4] Gamma is a non-parametric measure of correlation, equivalent to Spearman's *R*. It is the surplus of concordant pairs over disconcordant pairs as percentage of all pairs, ignoring ties. The Gamma statistic is preferable to Spearman's *R* when the data contain many tied observations (Agresti & Finlay, 1997).

To get a general description of *fluctuations* in public opinion on socialism, I compare responses across four intervals: 1988–93, 1993–98, 1998–2003, and 2003-08. Table 2 reveals considerable stability in how people assess the socialist regime (coefficients vary between 39 and 60 percent), but also substantial change. Up to 2003, in each of the five-years intervals one fifth of respondents switch from making a negative evaluation to making a positive one. The corresponding number for the 2003-2008 interval is lower: 14 percent. Opinions also change in the reverse direction, with 17 to18% of respondents going from positive to negative outlooks. It is also worth noting that 44% of respondents who in 2003 hold positive views of the socialist past expose a 'neutral' opinion in 2008.

Social Class and the Assessment of Socialism

To measure class structure in Poland prior to and after 1989, I apply the class schemes developed by Slomczynski and Shabad (2000, based on Kohn and Slomczynski 1990). The basic class distinctions for late socialism take into account three major criteria. First, the criterion of *control over labor* distinguishes between managers and supervisors. *Managers* formed a group that was directly involved in the process of economic planning. At the same time, they had to ensure that economic decisions be subordinated to ideological goals, which affected the group's interests in relation to other classes. Immediate control over labor identified *Supervisors* as a class exercising control over others; supervisors were, on the other hand, distinguished from managers, as they lacked any decision power over the production process.

The second criterion is *the distinction between mental and physical components of work.* In a state-own economy, the mental component of performed work differentiated non-manual workers from all manual workers. In socialist societies, *white-collar workers* constituted a class that did not have an antagonistic counterpart. At the same time, production work set *factory workers* at the core of the working class, differentiating them from all other types of manual workers. Economically, manual factory workers were central to socialist industrialization; politically, their concentration and the means of resistance (e.g. demonstrations and strikes) that such concentration allowed for, made this group the main bargaining force with the government, especially in countries like Poland.

The criterion *of ownership of the means of production* is restricted to *farmers* and a small group of *self-employed*. In Poland more than in any other socialist country in the region, farmers succeeded in maintaining ownership of the means of production. The self-employed was a residual class.

For the post-1989 period, the class schema keeps the basic distinctions for late socialism but introduces certain modifications to account for the economic restructuring. Specifically, the schema differentiates the self-employed from the

emerging capitalist class of employers; it introduces the category of sales and service workers; and it distinguishes between skilled and unskilled manual workers to reflect a new social division among workers following economic restructuring.[5] Appendix 1 provides the comparison of the Polish schema with the Wright's WRI and the Erikson-Golthorpe-Portocarero EGP schemas.

Table 3 shows, for 1988 and 2008, how members of the different social classes evaluate the socialist regime. In 1988, the proportion of positive assessments is highest among managers, experts, and supervisors.

Table 3. Social Class and Assessment of Socialism, 1988 and 2008

Social classes	Assessment of socialism					*N*
	three categories			five categories		
	positive (%)	neutral (%)	negative (%)	mean	SD	
1988						
Managers	47.3	33.6	19.1	3.32	0.839	131
Experts	32.3	48.0	19.7	3.18	0.782	269
Supervisors	31.4	41.0	27.5	3.06	0.862	334
Self-employed	19.2	51.7	29.1	2.91	0.890	151
Technicians and office workers	28.8	50.7	20.5	3.13	0.808	1008
Factory workers	23.4	50.0	26.6	2.98	0.851	1325
Manual workers other than factory	21.7	52.5	25.8	2.98	0.864	706
Farmers	26.9	50.0	23.1	3.09	0.854	892
Correlation	Cramer's $V = 0.10$			$Eta^2 = 0.01$		
2008						
Employers	16.7	35.7	47.6	2.53	0.962	35
Managers	24.2	42.4	33.3	2.94	0.964	27
Experts	18.4	42.1	39.5	2.77	0.791	88
Supervisors	22.7	42.1	39.5	2.92	0.969	38
Self-employed	16.4	34.5	49.1	2.74	0.902	41
Office workers	16.5	34.5	49.1	2.83	0.829	160
Sales and service workers	18.1	43.8	38.2	2.80	0.973	71
Skilled manual workers	26.8	43.7	29.5	2.97	0.914	178
Unskilled manual workers	25.4	54.2	20.4	3.09	0.845	103
Farmers	33.2	41.7	25.1	3.08	0.946	189
Correlation	Cramer's $V = 0.139$			$Eta^2 = 0.160$		

[5] As the privatization process of the Polish economy progressed, having specialized skills increased workers' chances to avoid lay-off and/or to get jobs in the private sector, placing them in a more favorable position relative to unskilled workers (see Kohn and Slomczynski 1990; Slomczynski and Shabad 2000 for a full discussion of the class schemes).

The finding goes along the paper's prediction, since these social groups were often tied to the *nomenklatura*, which offered certain political and economic privileges (Mach and Slomczynski 1995) while leaving little room for open criticism against the party-state. Nonetheless, it is also possible that views expressed in the 1988 POLPAN survey, conducted while the CP was in power, do not fully reflect individuals true beliefs about the party state, as

> People were often lying before (*nn* the systemic change) to get a job, to get a career (female, early eighties).

In 1988, the self-employed, factory workers, and manual workers are the last to praise socialism, for obvious reasons: the Polish communist system, while tolerating certain types of small enterprises, was not supportive of private businesses; as for workers, their discontent with the regime over the discrepancy between ideology (the leading role of the working class in particular) and the grim reality of everyday life translated into the well-known Solidarity movement (Laba 1991; Ost 1990). Overall, however, the relationship between class and assessment of socialism is very weak (as indicated by the correlation coefficients).

In 2008, the overall relation between class and assessment of the socialist regime is stronger than for 1988. We also see a different pattern in evaluation of socialism that seems to mirror peoples' experiences under the new socioeconomic and political conditions. Skilled and unskilled manual workers and farmers praised the past the most, while assessments by employers, self-employed, managers, and experts move into the opposite direction. In-depth interviews add valuable insights to these findings.

> People from Solidarity, workers from big factories they feel unsatisfied, they were involved in the resistance movement but in the process of restructuring they lost their jobs, they have little money, they are disappointed (female, mid-thirties).

In contrast

> … mangers and experts, entrepreneurs, have better education, they have better skills, which allow them to understand and to adapt to the new mechanism of the capitalist economy; they understand that they have new opportunities (male, mid-fifties).

Summing it up,

> ..if individuals receive a lot of rewards in post-communism, their opinion of socialism becomes negative (male, early fifties)

Quantitative analyses show that, in a sense, there is a reversal of the ordering of social classes in terms of assessment of socialism when one compares 2008 to 1988. As rational action theory and qualitative data suggest, this change is largely related to the experiences that members of the different social classes have had with the two types of regimes (i.e. socialism and capitalism). Of course, the overlap between the class structure before and after 1989 is not total. As indicated earlier, the new economic environment leads to the emergence of an entrepreneurial

elite while the division between skilled and unskilled manual workers becomes more salient than that between factory and non-factory workers (Slomczynski and Shabad 1997; Slomczynski and Mach 1997).

Structural and Contextual Determinants of Assessment of Socialism

I employ two cross-sectional logistic regression models to assess how structural and contextual variables impact *positive* evaluations of the socialist regime (1 = positive assessment; 0 = otherwise), controlling for demographics.[6] Since both regressions involve the entire 1988-2008 panel (N = 930), and the models control for prior assessment of socialism, the coefficients can be interpreted as weighted change. Table 4 displays the results.

Given past research on winners and losers of the post-communist transition (see Slomczynski and Marquart-Pyatt Eds. 2007) the privileged classes (i.e. employers, managers, experts) and the disadvantaged ones (skilled and unskilled manual workers and farmers) are analyzed in reference to a third group, made up of supervisors, the self-employed, office workers, and sales and service workers. The latter can be said to occupy the middle of the social hierarchy with respect to benefits and costs of the restructuring that followed 1989 (Slomczynski et al. 2007).

Table 4. Logistic Regression of Positive Assessment of Socialism in 2008 on Social Class, Controlling for Gender and Age

Independent variables	Logistic regression for positive assessment, $DV = \log(p / p - 1)$			Logistic regression for positive assessment, $DV = \log(p / p - 1)$		
	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)
	Model I: Effect of social class, controlling for lagged assessment of socialism			Model II: Effect of social class & political biography, controlling for lagged assessment of socialism		
Gender	0.269+	0.156	1.295	0.203	0.163	1.226
Age	0.026**	0.007	1.026	0.024**	0.007	1.024
Privileged classes	-0.186	0.253	0.830	-0.232	0.256	0.793
Disadvantaged classes	0.468**	0.176	1.596	0.522**	0.182	1.686
Positive assessment of socialism, 1988	0.266	0.167	1.305	0.209	0.170	1.232
Solidarity member				-0.073	0.198	0.929
Communist Party member				0.602*	0.265	1.826
Constant	-2.919	0.449		-2.980	0.460	
Fit statistics N = 930	$-2LH = 1032.189$ *Cox and Snell* $R^2 = 0.032$			$-2LH = 1027.164$ *Cox and Snell* $R^2 = 0.037$		

$^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{+}p < 0.10$

[6] Dependent variable (DV) = the log of the probability of the event divided by the probability of the nonevent. In similar analyses for 1988-2003 I also used logistic panel regression in STATA to address the issues of autocorrelation and multicollinearity that are inherent in panel data. Results of the cross-sectional analyses were consistent with those yielded by the panel regression.

The social context is operationalized through political organization membership. Material from the in-depth interviews pointed to the relevance of past political biographies for assessment of socialism:

> When you try to understand why Poles see socialism differently, think about these three different groups of people: first, was that person member of the CP or involved in the system of government; or, two, was he/she an active member of the opposition movement; or, three, are these people who did not engage in communism but also didn't take part in the underground movement (male, mid forties).

Accordingly, I contrast Solidarity members and CP members with respondents whose political biography includes neither of the two.

Findings partially confirm the class-related hypotheses: the directions of the relationships for both privileged and disadvantaged classes are as predicted; however, only the disadvantaged differ significantly from the comparison group. Specifically, manual workers and farmers are one and a half times more likely (exp(B) = 1.59) to rate the past socialist regime positively (as opposed to making a neutral or negative assessment) than are supervisors, the self-employed, office workers, and sales and service workers. This effect is above and beyond those of gender, age, and positive evaluation in 1988 (see Table 4, Model 1).

Empirical support for the expectations about the role of political biographies is also mixed (Table 4, Model 2). I posited that the social context would operate through individuals' experience with the Solidarity movement, and with the CP. While the relations between these two factors and the DV are in the predicted directions, only the coefficient for CP membership is statistically significant. Independent of other factors, people who belonged to the CP are almost twice as likely to assess the socialist regime positively (exp(B) = 1.82), compared to respondents who were neither in the Party, nor in Solidarity.

Conclusions and Discussion

This paper argues that individual experiences of the post-communist restructuring, rooted in previous social positions and biographical trajectories shape people's retrospective assessments of the socialist regime, as well their views of the changes following 1989. By and large, the research hypotheses received empirical support. Social class matters both prior and after 1989, however it does so in different manner. To a certain extent, we can say that the ordering of social classes in terms of assessment of socialism gets reversed when comparing 1988 to 2008. Regression results for 2008 further demonstrate the substantive and statistically significant effect of belonging to the disadvantaged. Regarding political biographies, I find that Communist Party membership is a salient contextual determinant. Twenty years after the change of system, former members of the Polish United Workers' Party are almost twice as likely to assess socialism in positive terms compared to people who had not been politically active (i.e. were neither CP nor Solidarity members)

I examined these relationships controlling for gender, age, and the lagged effect of assessment of socialism. Of the controls, the aging effect is consistently significant. Repeatedly, interviewees referred to the fact that people

> remember good times, good moments… They (*nn* people) simply remember that they were young, nice, in love, happy… (male, mid-forties).

And

> We tend to forget the rough edges of the past, we tend to idealize the past. We want to be young, healthy. (male, late fifties).

It is worth mentioning here that in a different project using the POLPAN data I showed that Markov-type processes do not have significant explanatory power for long-term change in opinions about socialism. Substantively, this means that political opinion change through time is not entirely due to some universal and time-constant process; rather, the 'subjective' legacy of the past matters (Tomescu-Dubrow 2008).

The regression analyses I presented are performed on Polish data. Nonetheless, the findings they yielded should help us understand the dynamics of public opinion of socialism in other post-communist countries, since (a) at the macro-level, Poland is representative of CEE in terms of post-1989 transformative economic and social processes, such as massive downsizing and/or closing down of industrial units, large-scale privatization of state-owned assets, the shrinking role of the state as provider of social benefits, and their consequences, rising social inequality especially; (b) the theory of individual action that the paper rests on is not country-specific; and (c) the impact of the social context through political biographies is not unique to Poland, given that sharp cleavages in people's political engagement with the Party State existed in all communist countries. At the same time, these results invite further research on why people change their views of the socialist past. The proportion of unexplained variance in assessment of socialism clearly leaves room for more explanation.

This topic is worth studying for reasons other than just historical, since it opens a testing ground for more general attitudes toward the emerging economic and political structures, such as the relation between references to the past and prospective orientations. In general, people judge their current success relative to their prior life conditions, as well as to how their contemporaries perform. In this sense, evaluation of the socialist regime reflects one's relative sense of present-day accomplishment. The changes in attitudes towards socialism observed among Polish managers and experts on one hand, and workers and farmers on the other lend themselves to this interpretation. Assuming that people use past and present experiences to make inferences about the future, assessment of socialism might affect perceptions of opportunities and threats embedded in the future—that is, future orientations. Empirical research would have to examine this hypothesis.

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Appendix 1: Comparison of the Polish schema with the Wright's WRI and the Erikson-Golthorpe-Portocarero EGP schemas

Table A.1 provides the comparison of the Polish schema with the Wright's WRI and the Erikson-Golthorpe-Portocarero EGP schemas.[7] In this table I indicated what categories of the WRI and EGP schemas correspond to the Polish schema. Some correspondence is perfect.

Table A1. Polish Social-Class Schema as Compared to Two Major Schemas: Wright's Schema, and Eriksion-Golthorpe-Portocarero Schema

Polish Schema	Wright's Schema	Eriksion-Golthorpe-Portocarero Schema
Employers	1. Capitalists 2. Small employers	I. Upper service class IVa. Small proprietors with employees
Managers	4. Expert managers 5. Skilled managers 6. Non-skilled managers	(I. Upper service class) (IIIa. Routine non-manual employees, higher grade)
Experts	(4. Expert managers) 10. Experts (7. Expert supervisors)	II. Lower service class IIIa. Routine non-manual employees, higher grade
Supervisors	(6. Non-skilled managers) 7. Expert supervisors 8. Skilled supervisors 9. Non-skilled supervisors	(V. Technicians and supervisors) (IIIb. Routine non-manual employees, lower grade)
Self-employed	3. Petty bourgeoisie	IVb Small proprietors without employees
Technicians & office workers	(11. Skilled workers)	IIIb. Routine non-manual employees, lower grade V. Technicians and supervisors
Skilled manual workers	11. Skilled workers	VI. Skilled manual workers
Unskilled manual workers	12. Non-skilled workers	VIIa. Semi- and unskilled manual workers (not in agriculture)
Farmers	(2. Small employers) (11. Skilled workers) (12. Non-skilled workers)	IVc. Farmers and self-employed workers in primary production VIIb. Semi- and unskilled manual workers in agriculture

For example WRI "petty bourgeoisie" and EGP "small proprietors without employees" well match self-employed. Similarly, WRI "non-skilled workers" and EGP "semi- and unskilled manual workers (not in agriculture)" correspond to unskilled manual workers. However, neither WRI nor EGP employs the full range criteria of the

[7] The names of some WRI and EGP classes are in parentheses since they correspond to more that one category in the Polish schema.

Polish schema. For example, WRI lacks the division of type of work and, in consequence, it does not distinguish between manual and non-manual work, or between agricultural and non-agricultural work. In consequence, for my categories of "technicians and office workers" on the one hand, and "farmers" on the other I could find appropriate categories only among those that fit also in other places. The main problem with EGP schema is that in distinguishing class categories it does not use the criterion of control over the work of others. Thus, EGP has no specific categories fitting to managers, and, in contrast to the Polish schema, supervisors are lumped together with technicians. Slomczynski (2002) and Domanski have applied the EGP and/or Wright schema, and these instruments explain less of variation in education, occupational status/rank and income than does this schema.

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Methodological Forum

FOREWORD

SIMION POP*

The current methodological forum contains three substantial articles coming from three different domains of anthropological research: material culture, historical anthropology and anthropology of religion. They all deal with realities of the same country, Romania. The vigorously reflexive methodological awareness promoted by this section is now enriched by the current contributions in two main senses.

First, the papers are keen to emphasize, in their own way, the complex intertwining of conceptual work and methodological assumptions. Our methodological reflexivity does not rely only on the refinement of specific methods (ethnography, archival research, or discourse analysis) and their skilful deployment in agreement with theoretical presumptions. It essentially involves an intensive search for ways of conceptually enhancing our methodological possibilities and capacities that are often disabled by our too well established theoretical-methodological connections.

Second, all three papers assertively make a case for still uncharted zones of Romanian social reality. Their arguments clearly entail that there is a close connection between the concealment of significant social configurations and our impoverished conceptual and methodological work. Răzvan Nicolescu, in his paper, reflects critically on the kind of anthropological understanding that a specific material culture approach grants to ethnography. Considering the particular material configurations in rural southeast Romania, through substantive ethnographic examples and stimulating conceptual work, he is able to question local attitudes and perspectives regarding "value", "work", and "modernity". Florin Faje's paper deals with uncharted historical configurations of Romanian communism. Making use of relevant archival research and discourse analysis, he approaches, from an anthropologically informed perspective of history, key notions and practices of the communist political project, such as "deviation", "critique" and "self-critique",

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and engages them as open categories of political power. Finally, Simion Pop's paper proposes a model for understanding Eastern Orthodox Christianity as object of anthropological understanding, insisting on the conceptual and methodological possibilities stemming out from a carefully thought notion of "tradition". New religious configurations are made visible for further ethnographic research by this particular perspective.

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EASTERN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY AS ANTHROPOLOGICAL OBJECT: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

SIMION POP[*]

ABSTRACT. In this paper I propose a model for understanding Eastern Orthodox Christianity (EOC) as object of anthropological understanding drawing mainly on Talal Asad's notion of "tradition". I present the conceptual and methodological advantages of such a standpoint by questioning scholarly and more general public views on the reconfiguration of EOC in post-socialist Romania, and single out the *institutionalist perspective* as being mainly responsible for an impoverished understanding of EOC. The anthropological approach opens up new conceptual and methodological avenues to what I called "the Orthodox complex space". Moreover, this new conceptualization enables fresh fields for ethnographic endeavor.

Keywords: Christianity, anthropology, tradition

Staging the questions: mixed signals

For many years now, a particular religious enterprise has stirred passionate arguments among diverse actors in the Romanian public spheres: the building of a grandiose national Orthodox cathedral in downtown Bucharest, "The Cathedral for the Nation's Salvation"[1]. Eventually, in 2011 the project initiated by the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) almost 20 years ago (catching up with an old interwar idea), after a sinuous post-socialist history due to endless negotiations between ROC, the state (local and national governments) and various NGOs over the funding sources and the exact urban location of the monumental building, is now on the way to its effective realization. The public funds generously offered by the current government for the project reignite a fierce debate over the actual connections between the state and ROC.

In this context, a high-profile woman politician from the National Liberal Party (part of the opposition at the time being) was invited to comment on this particular topic in a TV program on nationwide television. She argued vehemently that the religious enterprise was politically instrumentalized by the current government for electoral purposes, through public funding. In her opinion, as a

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[1] That is the English translation proposed on the official website of the Romanian Patriarchy.

liberal politician, the usage of high amounts of public funds directed to a particular church (denomination) threatened the proper separation of state and church, that is, the very foundation of a liberal democracy. Furthermore, her arguments were aimed against the project itself. The appropriateness of the project in times of economic crisis was called into question. At this point, besides the politicians' vested interests, she fiercely criticized ROC's representatives, high clergy and priests, for their general tendency to neglect the social and economic situation of the faithful, being more preoccupied with lucrative enterprises, legitimatory nationalist claims, and even megalomaniac power games. The annoyed liberal politician appeared to believe that, besides hindering the real separation of the state and church, a fact easily identifiable in political liberal terms, the intention of erecting a costly gigantic building does not at all represent the authentic Orthodox ethos. The Orthodox ethos, she held, was rather responsively attuned to the faithful's actual spiritual and material needs.

Interestingly enough, while arguing, the liberal politician seemed at ease with switching between her actual political identity and the tacitly asserted religious one. However, once during the conversation, she wanted to make things clear and said: "You know, I am criticizing this project as an Orthodox. Of course, I am not that kind of zealot Orthodox that goes to church all the time, every Sunday, but I can say something for sure. If I had to choose between a psychoanalyst[2] and a *duhovnic*[3] (*priest-confessor* or *spiritual father*), I would definitely go for the latter." After this brief remark she continued with her usual arguments, later on mentioning, once more, *en passant,* that she was well aware that besides numerous priests that seemed to betray their vocation there were definitely "charismatic"[her words] ones that really conveyed the Orthodox ethos.

This brief account provides a good introduction to the arguments of my paper because it hints, in a nutshell, to several significant questions that are relevant for an anthropological understanding of Eastern Orthodox Christianity (EOC), both in conceptual and methodological terms. Some of the issues stemming out from this account were tackled in the Romanian mass-media, very often in

[2] One must mention that in Romanian public debates the notion of "psychoanalysis" is often used interchangeably with that of "psychotherapy". It's almost certain that the politician was referring to modern psychotherapy in general so it's not an argument against a particular branch of it.

[3] In Romanian the term *duhovnic* can be translated in both ways, a "priest-confessor "or a "spiritual father ". Practically, in Romanian Orthodoxy (that's not the case of Greece, for example) the term *duhovnic* can refer both to the newly ordained parish priest and to the experienced elder monk. This ambiguity comes from the way in which the relation between the sacramental confession and the spiritual guidance is understood and practiced in Romanian Orthodoxy. In the Orthodox tradition at large there is this compelling idea that a reliable priest-confessor should be like a spiritual father and that also an experienced elder monk can offer sound spiritual guidance without being an ordained priest. Anyway, in Romanian Orthodoxy any ordained priest can hear confessions even though is not at all spiritually prepared for that. One can assume that our politician refers to those charismatic *duhovnici* (priests or monks) that really spiritually gifted.

connection to the Cathedral debate, by commentators belonging to various political and (non-) religious persuasions. I am referring to those issues related to the separation between state and church (or between "religion" and "politics" more generally) and the subsequent institutional arrangements as defined in a "secular-liberal democratic model". Political scientists, sociologists, historians and theologians have set out to advance a more consistent approach, in terms of empirical material and conceptual clarifications[4]. These scholarly pursuits suggest, in a convincing manner, that the current institutional arrangements and definitions, and their tensional and ambiguous interconnections are, for better or worse, embedded in particular histories, societal trajectories and religious or secular ideologies. These processes have decisively shaped ROC's institutional reconfiguration into the post-socialist public spheres and the political articulation of a "secular" ("laic") Romanian nation-state. The processes of "modernization" and "secularization", articulated in various conceptual and empirical forms[5], are usually the all-embracing narratives that frame these scholarly investigations.

Beyond strictly academic controversies there might be a gain for the general public debates over the role of religion in society. The different ideal models of separation between church and state articulated in political and civic rhetorics should be critically confronted with the actual socio-historical realities. However, even this exercise in realism is actually impoverished by some built-in conceptual and empirical limitations presented in the previously mentioned scholarly pursuits. These limitations have profound consequences for the academic and, more generally, public understanding of EOC. Therefore, it is crucial to question more fundamentally the manner we imagine the EOC's social "location" and its constant social reconfiguration. I suggest in this paper that an anthropological understanding would enhance our imagination contributing both to scholarly and general public debates. Let me mention for instance the extremely relevant debates over the "emancipatory" or "reactionary" social role of EOC.

Institutionalist perspective: a critique

I will single out here[6], in strict connection to the main argument of my paper, a specific *perspective* that haunts, I argue, more or less explicitly, almost all

[4] From many available references I suggest the better known volume published in 2007 by Lucian Turcescu&Lavinia Stan, *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania* (OUP) that cites abundantly references from political science, sociology, history and theology. That could offer a very good orientation in the field.

[5] Many times these master narratives are used in an uncritical manner as representing normative socio-historical trajectories.

[6] It would be very rewarding to criticize more systematically the conceptual and empirical limitations accompanying the application of various "modernization" and "secularization" theories to the Romanian Orthodox case.

the above mentioned scholarly, and not only, pursuits[7]. To be sure, I am not all contesting the fine results that have already come out from particular scholarly works, I am rather questioning an insidious general perspective as far as it hinders the imaginative articulation of EOC as an object of anthropological understanding. I will call it from here on, for the sake of brevity, *the institutionalist perspective* on EOC[8].

Simply put, *the institutionalist perspective* is characterized by a predilect focus on "the church" as an all-inclusive institution - in our case the Romanian Orthodox Church - that supposedly embodies in a totalizing manner the Eastern Orthodox tradition in a particular canonical territory and as a perfectly identifiable religious-political actor, in terms of discourses and practices, defined on its turn by particular structures of power[9]. This religious-political actor is defined within the boundaries of a nation-state[10] and of an already instituted national public spheres. This perspective presupposes, on one hand, a particular formal definition of religious politics (and its scope) and, on the other, sets aside many alternative definitions of what "the church" *is* or *does* in terms of public expressions (political or social-religious) and even in more radical theological terms (Louth, 2010; Tomka, 2006). Furthermore, "the church" as defined above is regarded as the main *locus* of identification for the Orthodox faithful. An impoverished notion of institutional socialization accompanies it. The phenomena of contestation and resistance are viewed against this institutionalist background[11].

This particular perspective prevent us to see how alternative modes of Orthodox reasoning (concurring, resisting or outspokenly contesting the official discourses and practices[12]) are socially and politically embedded within given

[7] To be sure, as already suggested, this particular perspective is to be found outside the academic discourse in general public debates as well. It can be identified across disciplinary boundaries in sociology of religion, historical sociology, political science, history, and theology. Because I'm not preoccupied here with the position of this perspective within the economy of a particular study, be it sociological or historical, I think it is not relevant to mention any references (see also note 4).

[8] I am not interested here to present the possible ideological (secular as well as religious) and intellectual sources of this perspective but, nevertheless, it would be very interesting to investigate how certain ecclesiastical and sociological models converge in it

[9] Often the definitions of this power structure exclude the laity.

[10] The numerous jurisdictional controversies between national Orthodox churches in diasporas is just another reinforcement of this definition. Historically one can explain this situation (see. Louth 2010) Still, it's striking how scholarly approaches assume uncritically ecclesiological models promoted by an religious institution.

[11] First we have to acknowledge the Weberian church-sect typology (Weber, 1978) as being an important intellectual source of the institutionalist perspective. Second, when I am questioning the institutionalist perspective I am not all considering that fundamental sociological questions of institutions and institutionalization should be discarded for that matter. I'm rather questioning the way in which this institutionalist perspective considers the Eastern Orthodox Christianity as an object of empirical investigation.

[12] See also the coming discussion in this paper on the limitations of dichotomous models: official vs. popular religion in the articulation of an anthropology of Christianity.

institutional settings and how different actors (individuals and groups) variously articulate tradition-based arguments into the modern public spheres. It conceals the pluralist definition and "self-understandings" of the Orthodox tradition and of its collective reconfigurations. *The institutionalist perspective* preeminently looking into church-state interactions and their configuration into the public spheres sets aside significant social-religious processes going on at the grassroots and having a great impact, I argue, on overall EOC's public reconfiguration. More significantly, it totally obscures the social-historical processes whereby the church as (national) institution and the Eastern Orthodox tradition at large are entangled in particular configurations.

Furthermore, *the institutionalist perspective* assumes that the modern public spheres are already configured (in rather secularist terms) and religious traditions are just another actor inhabiting them (Calhoun et al., 2011; Casanova, 2007). The ways in which the debates *within* a tradition are enmeshed, especially in the post-socialist "Orthodox countries", in the ongoing definition of the actual public spheres are thus ignored. If those ways are properly considered one can then ponder more appropriately the hermeneutic and practical resources of EOC entangled in social-political processes. Enclosed, as it appears in the institutionalist perspective, by a particular institutional configuration[13] the abundantly diverse resources of a tradition and, more importantly, the ways a tradition works are made invisible for empirical investigation and downplayed as having no real impact in the public spheres.

I have already suggested above several directions which our scholarly imagination, freed from the institutionalist perspective, can follow in order to grasp more comprehensively EOC's public presence. Still, I will contend, the anthropological understanding should go further addressing even more ambitious questions. In order to do that, we have to go back to the liberal politician's discourse which introduced my paper and to consider it again after one turns down the dominant tone of the political liberal rhetoric preoccupied with the institutional arrangements.

The *en passant* remark about the politician's religious identity could have easily gone unnoticed in the economy of the conversation (just another concession made by a clever politician to the Orthodox audience). Moreover, it could be considered as fitting perfectly into the economy of a classical liberal discourse that assumes the "private" quality of the religious questions: they belong to the

[13] I should strongly emphasize that I'm not proposing here a general anthropological understanding of "religion" in Romania but an anthropology of a particular tradition, Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The focus on processes of un-churching, de-institutionalization, individualization of "religion" is not a sign that sociology of religion is freed from the institutionalist perspective, especially when one wants to study the social dynamics of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Sometimes it rather reinforces this perspective. I would argue that the confusion of these two categories, "religion" and "tradition", to be found especially in the sociology of religion, but also in general public debates can lead us on very misleading tracks. See Asad 1993 for a critique of "universal" definition of "religion". See also Tomka 2007 for a critique of sociology of religion concepts when applied to EOC.

highly private space of spiritual guidance. The reference to the *duhovnic* and charismatic priests is not at all extraordinary and does not sound unexpected or unfamiliar to the Orthodox faithful (even for those who are not practicing assiduously the Orthodox faith) even though it can be argued is not at all common to other branches of Christianity. The attempt to define an "authentic" Orthodox ethos could be seen as a rhetorical artifice deployed in order to emphasize the mundane instrumentalization of a religious enterprise. The comparison with the psychoanalyst may suggest the irreducibility of religious questions of a "private" person as well as the relevant issue of the effective authority in "private" settings. And so on. There are many ways of downplaying the significance of that remark.

Still, the argument I want to make is not meant to probe her deep convictions, liberal or not, religious or not. I am rather interested in the surface, in the face value of the remark. The constant switch of identities, between religious and political, the indication of a certain *locus* (the encounter with a *duhovnic*) placed seemingly outside institutional boundaries, wherein the identity and the Orthodox ethos is shaped, the reference to a particular instance of religious authority are telling if considered from a fresh perspective. In my perspective, the account evokes well the condition of a still uncharted Orthodox social-religious territory shaped by embodied practices, social relations and religious authorities that often surfaces into the public debates and the academic discourse but then fades away unnoticed because we lack the necessary conceptual imagination to grasp it.

The Orthodox complex space: a sunk continent

My argument is not necessary about the relevance of a person's deep convictions but rather about the complex social space[14] (Asad, 2003:178) where Orthodox subjectivities are forged, successfully or not, in scalar relations to the state, politics and other institutional settings. The actual contours of "the Orthodox complex space" in Romania are continuously shaped by various post-socialist social-economic processes. The composite discourse of the liberal politician hints to that complex space of social relationships and practices defining EOC's "location" into the wide social context. However, this "complex space" is a social territory that is almost invisible to the scholarly research and to general public debates[15]. Nevertheless, it is inhabited by millions of Orthodox using certain existential devices for orientation and mapping. The limitations of the institutionalist perspective are clearer now.

[14] I draw on the idea of "complex space" proposed by Talal Asad and John Milbank.. in addition to that Talal Asad (2003:179) speaks about a complex space AND time as a fruitful way of thinking about the intersecting boundaries and heterogeneous activities of individuals and groups related to traditions. This notion makes visible the multiplicity of overlapping bonds and identities.

[15] There are several encouraging islands of research, such as the study of pilgrimages, but that not replace the need for a complex mapping of an entire continent.

Apart from secular-liberal ideologies that consider "religion" as a "private" domain, this particular perspective does a lot in concealing "the Orthodox complex space" from scholarly investigations and public interest.

In other words, this perspective prevents a more critical understanding of the connections and disconnections, the affinities and tensions, between the "public" and "private"[16] forms of Orthodox revivals and secularizations, and a more adequate mapping of the actual contours of "the Orthodox complex space", which is far from being contained by a particular institutional configuration as suggested by the institutionalist approach. The entanglements, into the public spheres, of forms of Orthodox ethical self-fashioning (within or outside various communitarian projects) and the manifold Orthodox public configurations are awaiting to be researched..

Transmitting a tradition: an anthropological perspective

The main argument of this paper is that an anthropological approach, considered both as conceptual and ethnographic enterprise, is well suited to make "the Orthodox complex space" visible. How can then one approach EOC as object of anthropological understanding? In the remainder of the paper I put forward, in a rather exploratory manner, a particular way of dealing with this question. I propose that around the notions of "tradition" and "transmission" one can elaborate a conceptual and methodological framework sensitive to the multifaceted transformation of EOC and to the variable geometry of "the Orthodox complex space". Significantly enough, this particular framework opens up new avenues for ethnographic research.

Before taking this further I would like to say something briefly about the status of conceptual work in my investigation. Even though, in what follows, I would like to refer mostly to conceptual work and to some of its methodological consequences, my arguments are closely connected to my long-term ethnographic fieldwork on Eastern Orthodox Christianity in several locations in post-socialist Transylvania. For me the slow discovery of that uncharted territory, "the Orthodox complex space", was the result of many concomitant ethnographic encounters. These significant encounters have dramatically changed *my relation* with the conceptual work of my research not in the common sense of mutual adjustment of theory and empirical material but in terms of *the usage* of concepts and theories (concepts or theories acquired before or after the fieldwork). What does a theory *do*? What does it make visible or obscure? and so on. These are very relevant questions in my own conceptual work. What follows is part of this kind of conceptual awareness.

[16] The boundaries between these notions are highly porous being continuously negotiated by various economic, political, social-religious processes that one should take into account .

By questioning modalities of transmitting a tradition[17], one seeks to respond at least to the following questions. How do different forms of the post-communist religious revivals variously articulate Eastern Orthodox tradition within the lives of individuals and communities? How are competing Orthodox modalities of transmission deployed under the new post-socialist conditions? What are the emergent tensions or affinities between the demands of individual devotion, ethical self-formation and the public forms of Eastern Orthodoxy? How do various articulations of the reciprocal dynamics of differentiation between "the religious' and "the secular" (e.g. forms of secularism coming in the wake of Europeanization processes) in the region condition and permit anew the religious transmission? Moreover, the questions of *who* (priests or high clergy, *duhovnici*, educators, public intellectuals, family etc.) transmits *what* to *whom* and in *what* contexts. "Who are the authoritative agents of transmission of Eastern Orthodox tradition?" and "who are the proper recipients?" are thus fundamental questions.

In general terms, I think of transmission as referring to social-religious processes whereby a "tradition" is variously articulated within particular communities and individual biographies and made effective as a way of living under particular socio-historical conditions. By investigating modalities of transmission one attempts to consider "tradition" as a form of life, a matrix of beliefs, languages and practices that generates both the means of transmission and its content. Modalities of transmission decide how a "tradition" is concretely embodied into the everyday life of the faithful and of various types of communities. For example, the so called "fundamentalist" or "traditionalist" religious formations can be better understood by analyzing the modalities of religious transmission involved in them. Moreover, traditional commitments, values, and sensibilities are permanently (re)generated by socio-religious processes aiming to create a "traditional self". The formative processes accompanying that reiteration are an essential part of transmission by opening up spaces for innovation and creativity on the part of individuals, communities, institutions. By investigating modalities of transmission one can get a good access to "the Orthodox complex space". In order to do that we first have to elaborate a more complex notion of what "a tradition" is and how it works.

In order to overcome the ways in which social sciences reifies the notion of "tradition", the solution is to see it not as an inert repository of beliefs and practices accumulated in time that is selectively referred to in order to legitimate a particular social order or configuration of values but rather as an ongoing dynamic generation, through various processes of transmission, of moral spaces, of capacities and dispositions that makes the particular traditional "content" relevant and actual as a way of living in the present as well as a way of evaluating the future.

[17] There are interesting approaches to this issue in French sociology of religion. See Danielle Hervieu-Leger (2007)

For a deeper substantiation of this somewhat general perspective on "tradition", in this paper I would like to take up the notion of "a discursive tradition" introduced by the anthropologist Talal Asad (1986, 1993, 1996, 2001). Asad's innovative approach based on his investigation of Islam and pre-Reformation Christianity enables anthropological investigation to be more sensitive to the modalities of transmission capable of articulating tradition in various socio-historical contexts.

A short interlude on the anthropology of Christianity

In this paper I have criticized the institutionalist perspective for hindering the articulation of a proper anthropological perspective on Eastern Orthodox Christianity. For that matter one is naturally tempted to turn to the ways in which anthropology dealt with other branches of Christianity (Cannell, 2006; Hann, 2007; Robbins, 2003, 2007) in order to find support for the current task. To briefly anticipate my argument, Asad's notion of "tradition" manages to overcome certain conceptual/methodological deadlocks that have prevented the elaboration of a more inclusive anthropology of Christianity.

Let me present now briefly some conceptual models for the study of Christianity still very influential in anthropology. I will try to identify the kind of questions that these conceptual resources prevent us from considering. Even though Christianity was not preferred as an object of study by anthropologists, the anthropological study of Christianity in Europe (especially the Catholic and Protestant branches) produced several distinguished ethnographies of Christianity embedded in local settings, especially in rural ones (Cannell, 2006; Badone, 1990). An acute awareness of the existence of diverse forms of "Christianity", that should not be excluded from the anthropological interest on the grounds that are not "orthodox" by standards of the official teaching of the church, prevents these studies to approach Christianity for itself as a coherent anthropological object. Christianity rather represents in a generic way the local "religion" embedded in the local "culture" and "society" as lived by the local "population".

However, "Christianity" as a "universal" tradition is obviously not the product of any local community and essentially supposes the existence of an "orthodoxy" propagated by the church (Cannell, 2006). Anthropologists argued that when approaching local Christianities ethnographically one can discern the existence of the "little tradition" and "popular", "lived", "practiced" religion which is heterodox, peripheral, local, and unreflexively oral and often have emerged in concurrence with the "great tradition", the "prescribed" or "official" religion, which is reflective, orthodox, textual, consciously cultivated and handed down by elites. Anthropologists were rather inclined to explore the texture of "little tradition" leaving "great tradition" to the theologians or church historians (Badone, 1990; Bowen, 1993).

To a certain extent, this way of approaching Christianity reflects the post-Reformation dynamics of Western Europe (Taylor, 2007; Cannell, 2006): the pressure to adopt a more personal, committed, inward form of religion against the so-called outward forms of ritualism and idolatry. Anthropologists were determined "to save" the popular forms of Christianity and for that matter they unreflexively propagated a notion of Christianity as being marked by a dualism between "spirit" and "flesh" ("materiality", "body", "senses"), between the transcendence of the inward religious consciousness and the immanence of the material or symbolic forms of mediations (Coakley, 2007; Taylor, 2007). It was assumed that official Christian "orthodoxy" tends to elevate the "spirit" above the "flesh" and to condemn forms of materialism, hedonism and idolatry that define more appropriately local Christianity .

For anthropologists, popular Christianities (Badone, 1990) were instances proving that the "heretical" affirmation of materiality and body is always there as a lived option for local, "peripheral" populations, many times socially and politically subversive. For that matter, there were emphasized Christian forms of devotion that on the one hand support this standpoint (for example, pilgrimages or carnivals) against more central sources of piety (prayer, deepening liturgical practices) and on the other dramatize a latent conflict between clergy and laity as social groups clearly delimited.

From my point of view, negating or neglecting a more complex anthropological understanding of the works of "orthodoxy", beyond rigid dichotomies, disables questions of change, revival, reform and inter-Christian encounters. More importantly, EOC cannot be represented as a coherent anthropological object outside the notion of "orthodoxy".

Still, I have to mention here that there is a current trend in the anthropology of religion that calls for the elaboration of an anthropology of Christianity *per se*, that has the ambition to consider Christianity in a more complex relation to locality (Robbins, 2007). Nevertheless, the anthropological studies within this trend are mainly predicated upon studies on the spreading of evangelical missionary Christianity (Protestant, neo-Protestant or Catholic) all over the world. They emphasize the capacity of Christianity, as a trans-cultural entity, to dislocate and reorganize local "traditions". The processes of conversion that set Christianity as "a religion of radical discontinuity" are the main focal point of investigation. The problem here is that Eastern Orthodox Christianity emphasizing the continuity and tradition rather than discontinuity is difficult to be grasped by the conceptual models proposed by this anthropological trend.

Talal Asad's notion of tradition

In this context, I will present the conceptual model for studying Eastern Orthodox Christianity based on Talal Asad's notion of "discursive tradition". Asad's notion is, first of all, a critique and an alternative proposition to the essentialist

definitions of tradition (Anjum, 2007) that consider it as being an unchanging, unhistorical and unreflected "substance", a stage of social development that belongs to the past and can be clearly defined as a bounded capsule of observed behavior and recorded belief. "Tradition" is usually defined in its relation to modernity, more obviously, as a form of irrational opposition to it and, more subtly, as a form employed for modern political legitimization (e.g. "invention of tradition"). Or, it is irreversibly dissolved by modern sensibilities and sometimes reconverted into a nostalgic event. However, the impossible condition of tradition in modernity is always highlighted.

According to Asad, "tradition" involves a particular mode of historicity (like modernity) presupposing a complex elaboration of the relations between past, present and future[18] (1986, 1996). This complex elaboration is shaped by "authorizing discourses" (Asad, 1986) that seek to instruct practitioners of that tradition regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history. These "authorizing discourses" are deployed through an engagement with the foundational events, texts, and conduct of exemplary figures. In this sense, the past is a constitutive condition for the understanding and reformulation of the present and the future of various instituted practices.

This notion of tradition does not suppose that everything the tradition's adherents do and say belongs to that tradition, nor that they simply imitate the past. It is rather the complex relationships between past, present, and future discourses and practices - constituted within a space of argumentation and reasoning in relation to the foundational "past" - that are decisive (Asad, 1986). An anthropological investigation based on this notion of tradition involves a fundamental concern with *the conditions* that produce traditional self-understandings, by being capable of capturing tradition's embeddedness in changing social conditions. Moreover, it seeks to understand the socio-historical conditions that enable (or disable) the production and maintenance of specific traditional practices or their transformation, and the efforts of practitioners to integrate change within their tradition.

In an anthropological investigation of EOC, the notion of tradition as conceptualized above does more than merely translate the theological term, "the Holy Tradition"[19], used to secure the distinction between the divine revelation and human traditions. It points to socio-culturally and historically specific

[18] Asad wants to go beyond this fix dichotomy, modernity vs. tradition, speaking about the coexistence of two modes of historicity (1996).

[19] "Tradition" corresponds closely to the Greek *paradosis*, which also comes from a verb (*paradidomi*) meaning "hand over", "transmit". "Tradition" and *paradosis* were commonly used in this sense by Latin and Greek Christian theologians to denote the body of teachings preserved and handed down by the church as "the true faith". Orthodox theologians and believers refer to it as the "Holy Tradition"

configurations of interactions between people, events, texts, commentaries, and institutional settings whereby this very distinction is continuously debated and argued for. A tradition, and EOC makes no difference, is a confrontational space of argumentation and reasoning. Discerning "the Holy Tradition" from "the human traditions" is, a typical Orthodox theological task, and one that supposes an ongoing discursive and practical argumentative commitment. (Parry, 2007; Fairbain, 2002).

As an anthropological object, EOC is unrecognizable without its self-reference to the Scripture and the eventful life of Jesus Christ as passed on by the apostles, to the theological formulation of the ecumenical synods ("creeds"), to the Church Fathers' writings and the liturgical practices; or, more concretely without its reference to the Byzantine synthesis (Parry, 2007). But the various modes in which the foundational "past" has been lived and articulated historically and spatially in specific contexts cannot be understood outside particular interactions with socio-historical and political conditions and the variety of agents that "speak" and "act" in the name of tradition (and its "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy") or against it. Tradition is thus variously articulated through authorizing processes that permanently *guide* and *define* the meaningful Christian experience in various contexts.

Furthermore, Asad's notion of tradition helps us go beyond a kind of methodological nationalism that characterizes many studies of EOC: the consideration of the "national church" as being the fundamental unit of analysis. Using this methodological frame some of the most significant historical developments in EOC are left aside (as in the case of the institutionalist perspective). For example, the exceptional shift from a "civilizational" reference to Byzantium to the "nationalization" of Orthodox churches and its influence on the future articulation (having far-reaching consequences for the life of the ordinary believer) of the Orthodox tradition. Asad's notion enables us to understand better the various forms of *institutionalization* of Eastern Orthodox tradition and to avoid the shortcomings of the institutionalist perspective. In the case of EOC the relations between the individual believer and her community and religious institutions are much more flexible and loose than in Catholicism, for instance. The church's control over various manifestations of religiosity is less authoritative (Tomka, 2006; Fairbairn, 2002). For that matter, the works of tradition cannot be reduced to the works of the church as institution (i.e. Romanian Orthodox Church). Moreover, in EOC, "the church" as a traditional (mystical) reality can be alternatively understood as a "community of worship" (or as "Eucharistic community") that can be actualized in different contexts, in different communities and by different actors, subverting sometimes the official institution (Louth, 2010; Fairbairn, 2002). In EOC, monasticism is one of the most powerful and prestigious among the carriers of tradition. It often goes against the official church.

Embodied practices and pedagogies of tradition

Another dimension of Asad's notion of tradition, besides the macro-level of socially and historically sedimented discourses I have discussed above, is the micro-level of embodied practices[20] (Mahmood, 2005 Asad, 1993, 2001; Scott, 2006). It is adequate to quote Asad's remarkable formulation that appears as a critique of W.C.Smith's cognitive notion of tradition:

> The tradition is thought of [in W.C.Smith's conception] as a cognitive framework, not as practical mode of living, not as technique for teaching body and mind to cultivate specific virtues and abilities that have been authorized, passed on, and reformulated down the generations. Concrete traditions are not sought of as sound and visual imaginary, as language uttered and inscribed (on paper, wood, stone, or film) or recorded in electronic media. They are not though of as ways in which body learns to paint and see, to sing and hear, and to dance and observe; as masters who can teach pupils how to do these things well; and practitioners who can excel in what they have been taught (or fail to do so). Yet such matters cannot be separated from the force and function of religious traditions – and so of religious experience (Asad, 2001: 216).

For that matter, in order to account for the richness and complexity of various articulations of a tradition, one needs to attend to its material, bodily and sensory regimes. To resume, tradition is a space were pedagogical processes of teaching and learning occur in order to cultivate one's self or to help cultivate others by articulating a meaningful relationship with the tradition's foundational "past". These processes presuppose particular visions of self, community and authority.

Having presented the macro- and micro-levels of tradition I can introduce more explicitly the notions of "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy" without which Asad's notion of tradition is inconceivable (Asad, 1986 1996; Anjum, 2007). These notions link macro- and micro-levels of tradition, historical discourses about instituted practices (such as communion, confession, fasting, prayer and so on) and the way in which one has to perform that practices properly. As I have already suggested the basic function of any tradition is to establish and enhance the "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy" in a given socio-historical context, that is, the unbroken relation to its foundational "past". "Orthodoxy" is not easy to secure in changing conditions, not because the orthodox discourse is necessarily against

[20] In my opinion the connections between micro- and macro- levels are many times ambiguous in Asad's work given that he strives to account both for the "external" and "internal" conditions for the constitution of a tradition. A more contextual approach would better understand these complex connections. In this sense anthropologies of "religion as practice of mediation" do a good job to supplement Asad's conceptual ambiguities (see Meyer, 2007; Meyendorff, 1982).

any change and conservative, as is usually considered, but because it aspires to be authoritative (Anjum, 2007). For anthropologists, "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy" are always to be thought *relationally* and not *substantively*. These notions define dynamically, within particular socio-historical contexts and particular communities, what being "true Christian" is, in accordance to tradition. In anthropological terms, this is how one can explain the diversity of local Christianities.

"Orthodoxy" and practices of mediation

As the embodied dimension of tradition suggests, the notions of "orthodoxy" and of "becoming true Christian" appear differently when one considers that Christians regard "materiality" and the "living body" as essential means for cultivating what particular traditions define as virtuous "orthodox" conduct (Asad, 2001; Cannell, 2006). These realities are seen as opportunities for developing capacities of acting and experiencing a tradition (Asad, 2001). "Orthodoxy", by maintaining a creative tension around various forms of mediation, embodied practices or sensational forms (Meyer, 2007), is unthinkable outside of them. This is highly significant if we bear in mind that EOC is considered, among other forms of Christianity, to be the most preoccupied with "materiality" by deploying complex forms of mediations (iconography, liturgical practice, architecture, music and so on) (Parry, 2007).

In this conceptual vein, the modalities of transmitting tradition have to be understood through the work of various "practices of mediation"[21] (Meyer, 2007) that constitute traditional subjects. As I mentioned before these practices of mediation involve specific bodily and sensory disciplines through which particular traditional sensibilities are honed. Authorized within a tradition, these practices are opportunities for developing capacities of acting and experiencing and, simultaneously, essential means for cultivating what that particular tradition defines as virtuous conduct (Asad, 1993, 2001). Various "modern" contexts and structures of power can nourish or inhibit certain "traditional" experiences and virtues. This particular conceptualization seeks to reappraise the relevance of the sensational forms, the body, and materiality for transmitting religion under various institutional-structural conditions and the challenges from competing "modern" "secular" authorities (state, schools, science, media, consumer culture, youth culture, and the discourse of Europeanization itself) which inculcate alternative secular mediated practices. In the case of EOC, these very assumptions open up new spaces for ethnographic work.

[21] See note 20.

Concluding remarks

An anthropology of EOC *as tradition* should neither reproduce historically contingent confessional or institutional boundaries nor should assume a kind of loose, unrecognizable Christian ecumenical imaginary. It should rather try to approach various contexts, interactions and communities as being, at one historical moment, dynamically configured by particular (many times competing) Orthodox modalities of transmission. This endeavor supposes not imposing a generic definition of "religion" ("true Christianity") and pre-established social and institutional boundaries on the field reality but rather the investigation of various authorizing processes whereby those boundaries are continuously defined and negotiated. In this paper I have proposed an anthropological approach to EOC based on the notions of "tradition" and "transmission". Drawing mainly on the work of Talal Asad I have tried to conceptually elaborate these notions in order to better grasp the post-socialist reconfigurations of "the Orthodox complex space" and also to secure new fields for the ethnography of EOC in post-socialist contexts.

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COMMUNIST DEVIATION, CRITIQUE AND SELF-CRITIQUE: A FEW INSIGHTS FROM ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY

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ABSTRACT. This article advocates that an anthropologically informed perspective of history is necessary in order to produce fresh evidence and knowledge of Romanian communism. It analyzes the confessions made by a young communist activist at a meeting of the Union of Working Youth (UTM) in 1952 showing how a grounded and relational vision of history allows for a better understanding of the complex process involved in establishing communist rule. The article discusses some of the key notions and practices of the communist political project, such as "deviation", "critique" and "self-critique", and engages them as open categories of political power. The proposed interpretation stresses their transformative impact up to the point of intricately altering individual biographies and lives.

Keywords: anthropology, history, power, representation, deviation, critique and self-critique

Introduction

The present analysis starts from a confession made by a young communist activist at a meeting held at the Cluj regional branch of the Union of Working Youth (UTM) at the time of great power struggles and subsequent purges that shook the Romanian communist party's leadership in the early 1950s. The story of the activist Farkas Isac provides the anthropologist and the historian a situation where the categories of political power are immediately taken up by a subject who feels interpellated by them. The case allows a glimpse into the actual establishment of the communist regime in Romania, showing how effective some of the strategies and tactics of creating and maintaining rule were and how intricately these have penetrated into personal biographies and lives, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Like any other political regime, the communist regime established in Romania after the Second World War unleashed a whole series of categories that were meant to describe existing social relations as well as to generate the necessary knowledge to radically rework them. Farkas's story is probably the dream of any modern state apparatus, eager to see its subjects translating their whole biographies in the new vocabulary that it has made available,

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making visible both the ethnographic and the statistical (defined à la Foucault as "the science of the state") power potential in every social notion used by any political regime. Terms such as "the working class," "socialist revolution," "the dictatorship of the proletariat" are among the most celebrated examples; "deviationism", "critique" and "self-critique" will be of primary concern here.

The case also illuminates some of the analytical strengths and openings to be found at the junction of anthropology and history as it provides an opportunity to discuss the potency of notions, concepts or categories in a context where social power was less settled, being nonetheless heavily present in its disciplining and punishing instantiations. In the initial years of Romanian communism, a whole system of representation was at stake, the massive military and political power of the Soviet Union had to be translated into effective, operational and durable national political power at every level of the system. This process of translation, understood as the process by which power comes to be presented and represented, I think is central for the understanding of coercion and consent in communist Romania. In this sense the events ranging from the most brutal and atrocious repression of dissidents to the ideological training of activists can be seen as moments in the process of establishing government and rule – socialist style -, that is of fixing power and "proper" categories of power upon its subjects. The end result should have been the creation of the new socialist subject. The meeting that I discuss should be seen as a moment in this great communist transformation, offering a glimpse into the actual operation of communist political power.

The most authoritative treatments of Romanian communism have mostly found their inspiration and expression in the form of political history, thus sharing in the strengths as well as the weaknesses of this perspective. Its vision, as one expected, has been directed towards the communist elites and was prolific in exposing their admittedly horrendous acts and policies. In this vain, the chief task of historians was to document the repressive nature of the regime, consequently legitimating the present through the delegitimation of the past. In one of the most recent formulations of this thesis, "communism" is downright presented as "a political religion" or "a form of resentment" and bluntly characterized as "mnemofobic", "axiofobic", and "noofobic" - a personified "communism" that presumably hates memory, values and spirit (Tismăneanu, 2011: 15-16). This is the universalizing pretension of political history at its best, but in spite of its parsimony, it illuminates fairly little of the history of Romanian communism relative to what comes to be silenced. In an anthropologically informed perspective of history, even if we assume the depiction of the communist political regime as a modern "political religion", provisionally suspending the suspicion that "the illusion of the epoch" (Marx, 1968) might be at play, this still begs the question of how this "religion" got disseminated, which were the beliefs and practices that insured its durability and how did they operate in everyday life. The focus of research is immediately diverted from the centers of power to mundane and marginal events, to the ways in which power

operates, to the social forms that make it more or less efficacious in particular social and historical conjunctures. To capture best the potential of the anthropological vision for historical research it is important to explore more accurately what remains outside the purview of political history.

In his critical description of Western historiography Michel de Certeau poignantly reveals the strengths as well as the pitfalls of modern political history. His work appears as a fully-fledged articulation of what we would today call an "anti-disciplinary" effort, a position shared by many researchers working at the junction of anthropology and history. The "science of history" emerging in the West between the 16th and the 18th century, de Certeau argues, fulfilled the double function of *legitimizing* the political power of the prince by providing a genealogy to it and of *modeling* the practices of exercising power by illustrating "proper" ways of using it (1988: 7). Thus, early historiographers were "not satisfied with historical justification of the prince through offering him a genealogical blazon. The prince receives a "lesson" provided by a technician of political management" (Certeau, 1988: 7). This betrays the precarious position of the historian that always finds himself "around power", doing the representational work of power without ever enjoying it. Nonetheless, there are historical conjunctions when "the *event* engages the *structure*", when "the whole order is at stake and, first of all, it seems to me, a system of representation, what grounds both knowledge and politics" (Certeau, 1997: 26). This is the terrain where many contemporary anthropologists feel at home, describing and interpreting representations of power by questioning the relations between events and structures in their spatial and temporal unfolding. The preference for grounded and inductive knowledge makes anthropological research reluctant and critical towards broad generalizations, probably even more so when representations of the past are at stake. Most importantly, anthropologists have concerned themselves with the depiction of "the people without history", exactly those who Western political history disempowers by silencing their voice. This makes anthropologically informed encounters with history to appear as subversive moves, continuously questioning both power and its representations. The search is on for "clues" that destabilize established wisdom as well as the power upholding it (Ginzburg, 1990). In short, an anti-hegemonic process of knowledge production that takes socio-cultural categories and practices in their social interconnection and unfolding as its ultimate measure, disseminating through writing alternative histories and empowering categories.

The meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Cluj Regional Branch of the Union of Working Youth (UTM), dated 16th of June 1952, show that fifty-four activists attended this particular event, including a representative of UTM's Central Committee and the regional representative of the Romanian Workers Party (PMR)

(see Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952). Such meetings were not at all uncommon at the time, as the early years of Romanian communism witnessed a proliferation of meetings at all levels from the utmost local to the national. At times, UTM and PMR activists would come together to debate and discuss several times a day, most probably a sign of the critical importance of quickly and thoroughly disseminating the Party's discursive terminology and plans. Initially my attention was drawn to this event by the fact that at this meeting the article "For the continuous strengthening of the Party" came to be presented and discussed. This is the famous article in which the anti-revolutionary "deeds" of the so-called "Moscow group" of communist leaders came to be presented and direct accusations of "deviationism" and "reconciliatorism" were formulated against Vasile Luca (Minister of Finance), Ana Pauker (Secretary of the Central Party Committee) and Teohari Georgescu (Minister of Internal Affairs). It is well known that the accusations formulated against them were, at least partly, fabricated by the communist leaders grouped around Gheorghe Gheroghiu-Dej, eager to oust some of their most threatening rivals. It is beyond the objectives of the present article to question the accuracy or the truth-value of these accusations. Taking a different perspective, I specifically look at the ways in which these accusations were formulated and represented for the rank-and-file apparatus of the party, to whom it was addressed as an illustration of the strength and vigilance of the party.

The article "For the continuous strengthening of the Party", in itself, is a must read for anyone investigating the early establishment of the Communist regime in Romania, but some of the reactions that ensued after the presentation of the text are even more intriguing. Most notably, the confession made by one of the UTM members, who immediately after the presentation denounced himself as a "right-wing deviationist" and subsequently asked to be punished. Since my reading of the archives was, at first, heavily loaded with the widely shared conception that little is to be found is such texts except for a display of the empty "wooden communist language", this document revealed, rather unexpectedly, that the categories used, far from being "wooden", abruptly entered into and spoke to intimate and personal experiences, while, in their turn, these experiences filled the categories with meaning.

The article on the continuous strengthening of the party was presented by the regional first-secretary of UTM Cluj in a literal fashion. The opening lines set the framework and tone of the whole exhibition and discussion: "the line of the Party is just, it follows the line for the country's industrialization, the strengthening and consolidation of the alliance between the working-class and the poor peasantry, at the same time fencing off the kulaks (*chiaburii*), the socialist transformation of agriculture, the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the alliance with the Soviet Union and the countries of popular democracy" (Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952, p. 21). After a short exposition of the progress made in industry and agriculture, the subject matter is directly addressed: "the treason"

of Vasile Luca. However, the accusations are not formulated directly. What follows is a brief history of his treacherous doings that starts well beyond the taking of power by the communist party, compiling his dealings starting from the illegality years of the organization in the late 1920s. One more reminder that history is rarely, if ever the domain of professional historians (Trouillot, 1995) and that communist revolutionaries were committed to both making and writing history.

The document refers to the analysis of Luca's and the others' behavior. This history, as presented at this particular meeting, is punctuated by a few important moments: in 1929 Luca supposedly encouraged "factionalism" (*fracționalism*) which took the party (operating in illegality of the time) close to its "liquidation"; in 1933, at the time of massive workers' strikes Luca was found to have opposed direct action; in 1939-1940 we find him presumably supporting the party's entrance into the National Salvation Front alliance – a "fascist organization". On the 23rd of August 1944, the symbolic founding date for the new regime, Luca was said to have argued against the "turning of arms" against Romania's initial allies in the Second World War, the Germans. Since 1944 Luca appears to have been against a whole series of initiatives taken up by the party: "electrification, the construction of the Danube-Black Sea canal, the construction of The Spark's House and others" (Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952, p. 22). Moreover, he appears to have formulated a whole series of "opportunist theories" stating that "socialism's base is to be found in small industry, rather than heavy industry", that "on the road to socialism class struggle fades away, rather than becoming sharper and sharper". Not only were such theories formulated, but some of them were put in practice, thus some of the "kulaks were listed as middleman peasants and avoided taxation" or "he sabotaged the investment plan of heavy industry" (Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952, p. 22). As presented, this is a fierce history of Luca's wrongdoings that immediately begs the question of how was all this possible. The reputation of the party had to be saved and strengthened. The answer is twofold: the help of his close collaborators, Ana Pauker and Teohari Georgescu, and strategically more important his personal character, depicted as prone to right-wing deviation.

The accusations against Pauker and Georgescu are developed in the same register, albeit in a more condensed manner. First of all, they are both denounced for their "reconciliatory" attitude towards Luca. Comrade Teohari is held responsible for his passivity in tackling "speculation" as well as his "lack of combativeness towards the class enemy". As long as Pauker is concerned, the exposition underlies her negative contribution in the process of collectivization and a left-wing deviation is exposed as the "free will" of those entering collective farms was not respected. Besides, both leaders were considered to have acted against the principles of the party, by discussing their assumed position prior to the meeting of the Central Committee. Their overall attitude has made it even more difficult for the party to uncover the misdeeds of Vasile Luca. The exposition reaches its climax when the

most pressing question is asked: "How was Vasile Luca able to apply all these wrong lines?" (Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952, p. 23). The answer might appear puzzling, but only if cast outside of the logic into which it got formulated. The text makes it plain clear that his "hypocrisy (*fățărnicie*), common to all deviators" is to blame. I find this answer extraordinary because in light of a long and complicated list of accusations appeal is made to the individual's character, rather than to some well-though, prepared and executed conspiracy, sabotage, or the like. It is this personal trait of character that is supposed to make coherent the history of his wrongdoings. The text appears to suggest that hypocrisy was operating at the time of each deviation from the party's line.

In my interpretation, the proposed answer is formidable on at least three accounts. I have already hinted at the first: his trait of character rounds-up and gives a sense of coherence to the previous history. Secondly, if Luca's hypocrisy is to blame, this opens a space that extends well beyond the logic of rational political calculation. At least in principle his "deviations" might have been the result of hidden or unconscious processes, anyhow things that he was not immediately aware of. Thirdly, and most important for the present argument, is the pedagogical power of this solution. I am encouraged to take up this line of interpretation precisely because Luca's downfall story was intended to be an example for the communist rank-and-file as the text connects it with the constant need for reflexivity following Lenin's principle of "critique and self-critique", which himself as well as Stalin saw as one of the most powerful revolutionary instruments. The latter praises the former when quoting him in a short 1928 text on the matter: "The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how serious the party is and how it in practice fulfills its obligations towards its *class* and the toiling *masses. Frankly admitting a mistake,* ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the circumstances which gave rise to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it—that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class,* and then the *masses*" (Lenin quoted in Stalin, 1928). Thus, the communist activists were not only supposed to familiarize themselves and to obediently follow the line of the Party, they also had to constantly check their ideas and practices. One of the primary aims of the various meetings, discussions, and debates, in the early 1950s Romania was precisely to offer places for such critique and self-critique. As we shall see our young activist takes up this tool and ruthlessly turns it upon himself.

I often told the story of Farkas Isac when asked about my discoveries in the archives. Farkas' retrospectively tragicomic intervention is sure to make an impression on my interlocutors. Some emphasized the tragedy of it by all means, while others noted its comic aspects, but certainly everyone reacted to and was moved by it. In short, the story is about Farkas' confusion between right-wing and left-wing deviationism. Farkas was the first to stand up and make an intervention

after the presentation of the already discussed article. In brief he denounced himself as a "right-wing deviationist", like Luca, for his alleged passivity as a young boy when his parents planned to immigrate to Palestine or, in his own words, the biblical land of Israel. He did nothing to stop them. Subsequently, he asked to be punished by being sent "to re-qualify in production" (*recalificare în producție*), that was becoming a low-level worker. However, this was only half of the story. Later on, after a discussion with the UTM secretary during a break at the very same meeting, Farkas would come back to argue that he was initially wrong to consider his deeds as right-wing deviationism. He argued that his actions cannot be analyzed in an analogy with those of Luca, yet he did agree that he was mistaken. Nevertheless, he could better serve the party by strengthening his knowledge and, after promising to do so, he asked to remain an activist. It seems that his enthusiasm to serve the party (a left-wing deviation) pushed him into an erroneous judgment. In my reading Isac Farkas' oscillations, when he was faced with the discursive power of the party in the form of the denunciatory article, bespeaks the difficulty to ground the new categories of power even among devoted activists. The source of the tragicomedy usually derives from the inability to frame past and present events into more or less settled representations, that is to give them a somewhat coherent discursive formulation, and Farkas Isac makes no exception.

Once the presentation was over, the meeting's secretary noted Farkas to have made the following points. Below is the entry in full:

> Comrade Farkas Isac shows that following the Decision of the CC [Central Committee] of PMR regarding the treasonous actions of Luca and his aides, as a Party member he analyzed his activity, and although he was previously checked and has also fought in the Red Army, because he wanted to leave for Palestine with his parents he considers that he does not deserve to be an UTM activist. Of course, at the time he was not aware of the mistake he was committing in relation to the Party. He now thinks that it would be best and asks permission to go into production to qualify. He considers that he did not receive the sentence that he deserved when he was previously sent in low-level work, as long as he was not able to convince his parents not to leave for Izrael.
>
> The Party's documents have strengthened even more his will to work for the cause of the working class. He considers that the cadres school has also contributed to the dissemination of the materials edited by Luca, through the study of these materials. He thinks that it one of his mistakes, as a member of the Party, not to have identified the deviations and errors present in Luca's materials [*broken page*], is the lack of party members whom do not study enough.
>
> For him the Party's documents represent a source of strength, tying him to the Party and he is convinced that he will contribute towards the strengthening of the Party through the discovery of unsuited elements.
>
> He does not agree that going into production to qualify is a wrong line.
>
> (Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952, p. 26-27)

Farkas's intervention was followed by several others. In one way or another, the activists denounce the activities of Luca, Pauker and Georgescu and claim to act appropriately to combat deviationism and reconciliatorism. Three of the interventions directly engage with Farkas' statement, each of the three members considering his attitude and his demands mistaken. While one of them simply states that his position is wrong without providing any argumentation, one of the others mentions "his lack of trust in his own force" as the source of his position and the last one invokes the reason of the party in judging his fate as "the Party knows best where he belongs". After the lunch break Farkas will return and change his position. His statements are presented thus:

> Comrade Farkas Isac takes a position towards the mistakes he made when he took speech before lunch, when he discussed his mistakes in comparison to Luca's right-wing deviation and asked to be sent in production. Out of all this, he has learned that he can qualify by thoroughly studying Marxism and the role of the activists in building socialism. It is not necessary to be qualified in work in order to be able to speak to workers in production regarding production and their tasks.
>
> In relation to Luca's anti-Party and anti-state actions he takes a condemning position, seeing them as a filthy deed, by trying to introduce fractions in the ranks of the Party. He equally condemns the reconciliatorism of comrade Ana and comrade Teohari, which proves their split from the masses from which they have rose and which has damaged the development of collectivization. For example, in the Mures region where collective farms were created with the use of force, thus giving birth to weak collective farms.
>
> He condemns the attitude of Luca, of comrade Ana and comrade Teohari, and he engages himself to fight endlessly to raise the combative spirit in the cadres school, to develop the spirit of critique and self-critique among pupils, to train healthy cadres for the organization, which can in turn become suited members of the Party.
>
> (Fondul UTM (65), Dosar nr. 3/1952, p. 33)

I have found several points of Farkas' position remarkable since first reading it, but three of them deserve to be emphasized: first, the social space in which the document was produced and the hints that it contains for analyzing it; second, a discussion of the notion of "deviation" and how the young activist used it in order to mold and present his own biography; and third, based on these short texts I will pinpoint a few considerations on the principle of critique and self-critique, which I have found critical for understanding the operation of communist power in the early phase of Romanian communist rule.

Discussion

The minutes of this meeting abruptly confront us to decipher the social relations that have made the production of the document, in this form and with this particular content, possible in the first place. It is immediately apparent that the

trigger of the meeting is represented by the power struggles among the Romanian Workers Party leadership that culminated in the accusations and subsequent sidelining of Luca, Pauker, and Georgescu. This already creates a "place", as "the event cannot be dissociated from the options to which it *gave place*" (Certeau, 1997: 3), which enables certain practices (while disabling others) as well as certain social categories that make those very practices intelligible. It essentially predicates the simple fact that any neat societal division - leader/follower, perpetrator/victim, etc. - is but a retrospective fixation of otherwise fluid practices and representations. What becomes critical to investigate is the unequal distribution of power that constitutes and temporarily upholds these positions. In this sense, Farkas Isac and his colleagues share the same place with the party's leaders, in their turn connected to Moscow based Soviet leaders and so on and the practices and meanings that make this place become what we might call a "communist social space". This is a radically open view of politics and societies, one that resists, as much as possible, in consecrating definitive truths.

Given the limited variety of options at his disposal, Farkas Isac seized the opportunity to present himself in the jargon that party politics made available to him in the summer of 1952. He swiftly assumed the logic that held political power and its categories together and entered into a process of self-reflection and learning, with his destiny at stake. Most probably, the downfall of Luca spoke legions in relation to his own experience as a Jew and Hungarian in Romanian Transylvania. "Like Luca" might have well referred to Luca's similar ethnic belonging, himself a Hungarian Jew born in Transylvania. This observation is already enough to allow the questions of marginalization of Jews and Hungarians in interwar Transylvania to pour in as well as those regarding their tendency to support the Communist Party. Farkas Isac, "like Luca", had a personal history that in light of the new categories of rule was susceptible to incriminate him. He thus confronts the risk of forced confession and self-accusation. Was it mere opportunism or political belief from his part? We might never find out, but the point still remains regarding the effectiveness of communist political power to acquire consent. This short intervention already mitigates the view of communist power striking from above with such a force that a mass of helpless subjects had no other options but to accept it. In this sense Farkas Isac's position and practice, that would usually get silenced, can be seen as mediating the establishment of communist rule. We can assume that he went on to refine his knowledge and teach it, as he promised, in the local cadres school.

This integral and open view of social and political life should also make us cautious to the way in which I have introduced the "character". The tragicomedy of the situation described is but a retrospective interpretation and reaction to the events, as re-presented by a positioned narrator, made possible by the temporal distance and the unavoidably selective nature of any narration. Were I to emphasize

more the constraining and coercive nature of communist power, we would most probably side with a tragic interpretation, just as an emphasis on his humbleness in grounding the notions of deviation and self-critique in his personal biography would make it rather comic. However, an ethnographic reminder is most welcome when analyzing such testimonies and seriously engaging them, not only because this particular one might have been deadly serious for Farkas Isac. Hastrup cogently makes this very point when she argues that: "Anthropological knowledge is not simply knowledge about particular events, practices and ideas, but about processes by which these come to appear meaningful, perhaps inevitable or mandatory, possibly contestable or even mad" (2004: 468). This leads us to our second point of concern, how Farkas Isac used and infused the notions of deviation, critique and self-critique with meaning.

The notion of "deviation" has undoubtedly been central in all communist regimes, especially because of the ways in which it has been instrumentalized in the innumerable political trials that were to become trademarks of these regimes. In this respect, the accusations formulated against Luca are by no means exceptional, he shared into an illustrious panoply of communist leaders fallen in disrepute and most often viciously punished. But there is far little stress on the pedagogical intent of such trials and notions. The rank-and-file of the party, as we have just seen, were exposed to these processes and to a new vocabulary and were expected to react and position themselves in relation to them. This was a massive process of refashioning of the self, of the biographies and practices of communist activists which could not leave the categories of rule unaltered[1]. What Isac Farkas' testimony shows is precisely the struggle to come to terms with the notion of "deviation" and to arrange his biography accordingly. By engaging this struggle he willy-nilly moves to areas quite remote from the intended line of the party, only to be brought back in the interaction with his comrades.

Communist deviation was always defined to occur in relation to the line taken by the party. In the early years of communism in the Soviet Union, China, Romania and elsewhere the economic problems and processes were constitutive for the adopted line. The question was how to best further the "revolutionary achievements" in industry and agriculture and the difficulties accompanying it. Deviation, in its two modalities: right-wing and left-wing, appeared as forms of divergence from these modernization plans. The Chinese communist leader Mao Tse-Tung provided one the clearest expressions of deviationism when he argued against Right opportunist views in 1953. According to Mao "the departure from the general line of the Party" that set out "to accomplish the industrialization of the country and the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist

[1] For an insightful articulation of this research position see Halfin (2003 and 2009).

industry and commerce in ten to fifteen years" might cause "Left or Right mistakes" (1953). The former are expressed by those showing "impatience" in this transition period, while the latter, and the most dangerous ones, by those failing to realize the temporality brought about by the revolution. For Mao, right-wing deviations were covered by three major slogans: to "firmly establish the new-democratic social order", which fails to realize that the social order is never fixed and new developments occur all the time, to "move from New Democracy towards socialism", which fails to account for the content of that very movement, and to "sustain private property", which he simply dismisses. Mao's proposal is for a "step-by-step transition to socialism" according to a neat plan, in short "going too fast means erring to the "Left", standing still means erring too much to the Right" (1953).

It is soon obvious that the Romanian communist leaders were quite close to this understanding when formulating their accusations against Luca, on the other hand it is equally obvious that Farkas Isac was deviating quite much from their notion of "deviation". He translates this dialectic of passivity - activity onto his own biography, his misdemeanor is to have been passive when his parents wanted to migrate to Palestine, an act that might have deprived the party of his skills and energy in time of need, retrospectively making him a right-wing deviationist. In the later intervention, we find the young activist from Cluj positioning himself more on the active side, as he takes note of his earlier "mistake" and promises to study and disseminate the knowledge sanctioned by the party. In his second statement he comes closer to the line of the party, his vision is no longer directed to his individual past, but to a future of learning and service. The example he furnishes supports this interpretation, as he is no longer referring to his individual actions, but to the process of collectivization of agriculture and how it went about in the Mures County. It is important to stress yet again that it is only by looking at the meaning that the activist ascribed to the notion of "deviation" that we get a more accurate picture of the diverse and often conflicting ways in which a political vocabulary comes to be disseminated and take hold in individual biographies. The overall process that was supposed to make this translation possible according to the communist theoreticians/practitioners was that of "critique and self-critique".

In general terms, the possibility to observe and to articulate a set of social phenomena as deviations requires a process of knowledge production making it visible as such. In my view "the weapon of critique and self-critique" was originally intended precisely as a process of knowledge production. We can make sense of it by treating critique and self-critique as a "bureaucratic logic" that the communists were desperately trying to assume, disseminate and manipulate. I should immediately stress that I take the notion of "bureaucratic logic" in the specific definition consecrated by Handelman, who defines it as "a logic of the forming of form" to account for the hidden processes that operate to generate a relative coherence in the unfolding of "public events" (Handelman, 2004). Using a series of

cases from contemporary Israel society, Handelman convincingly shows how the Israeli state and nationalism is continuously produced and reproduced in mundane social relations that bureaucratic power infuses with controlled and specific meanings, and just how the deviations and potential deviations are brought into the politically correct line through events of commemoration and celebration. The Leninist principle of critique and self-critique and the meetings organized to comprehend and use it can be seen as fulfilling the same integrative function for the rank-and-file of communist parties. In this respect, Isac Farkas' struggle to define and classify his deviation is an effort to assume and master, in his very practice, the logic of critique and self-critique as it was presented to him.

This reading illuminates further, what exactly was at stake in the "strengthening" of the Romanian Workers' Party. The accusations formulated against Luca, Pauker and Georgescu already show the logic of communist critique at play. Their fellow comrades mercilessly criticize all of them and although they manage to oust them, subsequent research showed that this was not enough. A constant pressure was later exercised on Ana Pauker to testify of her deviation, which she never did (Spăriosu, 2009). This would have allowed for the logic of critique and self-critique to come full circle and might have provided the opportunity for a Stalinist-type show trial. However, this was not so much of a lack in relation to the party's cadres whom were expected to make daily use of this "weapon". As I have previously argued, our young activist did just that when translating the logic of critique and self-critique into his practice. In one way he did make a small contribution to the strengthening of the party, at least by demonstrating that this logic can be made operational and can produce and fix some of the meanings that the party leaders required. The full extent of the Communists's political power is thus best illustrated when both its categorical representations as well as their combinatory logic meet in the discourse and practice of the activists.

Conclusion

This short discussion makes apparent the complex operation involved in the grounding of communist rule in post-World War II Romania. The interpretation was facilitated by an anthropologically inspired view of history, one that allowed us to move away from the certainties of Romanian political history into the mundane realm of communist activists' ideas and practices, recapturing for analysis a place of interaction often missed by the rigid focus on repression. Along this line, it was possible to treat a specific document presenting the unfolding of a meeting at the UTM's regional branch in Cluj as a moment in the process of fixing communist power. This view pushed us to investigate the relation of a young activist with the representations of power that were made available to him through the accusations formulated against some prominent communist leaders. Beyond the retrospective

tragicomedy of the situation, by following his struggle to come to terms with the new political realities we were able to nuance the meanings of prominent communist notions like "deviation", "critique" and "self-critique" and show their subtle and intimate pedagogical force in relation to the rank-and-file of the party. Moreover, the confusions, contradictions and inadvertencies that make up Isac Farkas' testimony contribute to an interpretation of communist categories and practices that does justice to those who supported and believed in the promises of the regime. The present article set forth a few inroads towards such an alternative analytical vision, advocating its great potential for future research. It should be obvious that an alternative consideration of the history of communism is ultimately at stake.

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MATERIAL CULTURE AS ETHNOGRAPHY. VALUE, WORK AND MODERNITY IN RURAL ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to reflect critically on the kind of anthropological understanding a specific material culture approach grants to ethnography. First, I will discuss the ways in which a particular theory of material culture attempts to understand the social. I will then discuss substantive examples from my own ethnographic work in rural southeast Romania in order to present some of the potential pitfalls and challenges this method could entail. Exploring local attitudes and perspectives regarding value, work, and modernity, I will show what kind of particular knowledge an anthropological theory of material culture can facilitate.

Keywords: material culture, ethnography, modernity, Romania

Introduction

There are many ways to describe material culture. For academic disciplines as diverse as archaeology, architecture, history, psychology and media studies, it is both a theoretical framework and a method. While the theoretical implications stem from a particular philosophical understanding of the world, the methods represent the various ways in which these disciplines approach, explore and become aware of the materiality they normally engage with. I will start this paper by discussing one particular method of understanding materiality developed within the material culture school at University College London where I was trained in the last five years.[1] I will then discuss some of the key notions in my fieldwork in rural Romania[2] in relation with the material culture theory. I will explore the local notions of value, work, and modernity neither in a critical nor in a polemical way. Rather, the main motivation of this paper is to contribute to the diversity of understandings that are possible in social sciences, as this methodological forum attempts to portray.

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[1] For a detailed description of this school see Buchli 2002.

[2] I have been conducting fieldwork during 2009-10 in the east Bărăgan region as part of my PhD training at UCL.

Material culture, some fundaments

I will start by looking at the way we usually perceive or claim to understand the world. As it has been noted (e.g. Buchli, 2002, Miller, 2005), people tend to have a minimalistic and even negative view of materiality. From the majority of world religions to present critiques of mass consumption and media in different elitist spaces, materiality has always been presented as being, for example, simply naïve or unworthy to represent more fundamental issues at stake for societies. On the other hand, societies have always favoured in many ways materiality, as a sort of privileged and immediate manifestation of their monumental or mere banal ambitions. Therefore, historically we have witnessed on the one hand to many grandiose and fetishizing attempts to represent the immaterial through the material, and on the other hand to sustained attempts to reject the material, such as through various forms of iconoclasm.[3] At the same time, much of the world population now lives under an immense weight of the visual, and in particular, in knowing through the visual. Modernity has to a great extent deepened this kind of knowledge through the radical Cartesian split between spirit and substance. Acknowledging the fact that we live in a world arranged around such a radical distinction between two entities that paradoxically seem to not always be in competition, how does a theory of material culture help us understand what is actually going on in the world?

Daniel Miller[4] traces the rationale of material culture to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1979). In this work Hegel argues that "there can be no fundamental separation between humanity and materiality – that everything that we are and do arises out of the reflection upon ourselves given by the mirror image of the process by which we create form and are created by the same process" (Miller, 2005: 8). A fundamental part of this process aims at a continuous accumulation and identification of self-conscience which he calls *objectification*. This is part of a dialectical process in which a succession of sequences of personal alienation leads to a specific understanding of the self.[5] Therefore, as the story unfolds the subject changes continuously and becomes increasingly aware of the self. Importantly enough, the self-conscience takes shape also from the conscience of the surrounding entities. In social sciences this is relevant as we can identify this process in virtually any institution and practice.

Marx (1988) separates this dialectical process in two distinct parts: one of *alienation* where we do not recognize the world; followed by a moment in which

[3] For a special discussion of iconoclasm see Latour. He proposes the word *iconoclash* in order to better express the incertitudes and tensions of such an act.

[4] Most of the ideas from these paragraphs try to summarize the fundamentals of Daniel Miller understanding of material culture as presented for example in (2005) and (1987).

[5] Miller argues that even if Hegel was interested in the nature of logic and reason, his theory of objectification can be used as a theory of culture (2005: 10).

we actually recognize and give meaning to it. While Marx focuses on the first part where objectification means alienation, loss, uncertainty, a process irremediably negative, petrified, and insufficiently fluid as in Hegel, Miller sees objectification as a process that "creates our sense of ourselves as subjects and the institutions that constitute society but which are always appropriations of the materiality by which they are constituted" (2005: 37). In his own theory of objectification, he argues "the key criteria for judging the utility of contemporary objects is the degree to which they may or may not be appropriated from the forces which created them, which are mainly, of necessity, alienating" (Miller, 1987: 215). Therefore, objects do not exist in themselves, but they are in a dialectical process alongside people who actually use them. This very process eventually generates "potentially inalienable cultures".

But how could these philosophical ideas account for a theory of material culture? Daniel Miller identifies three main bedrocks for such understanding in the particular dialectics developed by the Georg Simmel (2004) and Pierre Bourdieu (1977), and in the frame theory developed by Erving Goffman (1986). While both Simmel[6] and Bourdieu[7] argue that we are permanently socialized through the material culture around us (for example by money or urban experience and respectively by the Kabyle fields or house), Goffman brilliantly shows that the most important factor that guides or shapes our understanding is not the content but the frame. Therefore, social processes are understood not simply by looking at what people say or do, but also while asking what they are engaging with in their everyday lives.

Therefore, even if they come from different theoretical traditions, the above authors reject any sort of pre-existing and prevailing notions of the "social". Rather, the cultural understanding of world societies is driven by the way they understand to explore the dialectical relation between humans and their things. Therefore, they stand against the predominant Durkheimian premises of social sciences which assume that the "social" has always been constituted exclusively by some sort of willing subjects and their passionate ideas. In such a world, the objects were evident because they passively worked as stage or excuse for humans, who were taken as the real actors. I do not have enough space to discuss these issues here, but I just want to make it clear that material culture studies understand the world

[6] For example he writes about money as paradox: on the one hand money brings freedom, and on the other hand they represent a historical vehicle that allows, and even encourages, major social inequalities. By looking at how people use money, they give meaning and social value to the objects that surround them, as well as to the social practices the engage with.

[7] Bourdieu (1977) eloquently demonstrates how the dialectical theory talks about a process in which objects and subjects are created together and reciprocally influence each other in a dynamic way. His theory of practice is not a theory of the people but mainly of how the materiality of their living mediates such practices.

as mutually constituted by subjects and objects, and therefore they consider both bizarre and limiting to reduce the study of societies to any one of these issues. An extreme tendency in such studies is for example represented by the theories of Bruno Latour (2005) and others, such as Donna Haraway's writings on cyborgs, who even try to establish a kind of equality, and equity, between humans and non-humans. These perspectives could find themselves to be either too rigid or insufficient (e.g. Actor Network Theory), or inadequately pre-Durkheimian (see for example the popular reiteration of the Durkheim – Tarde debate).[8]

In the midst of these cultural debates, most anthropologists interested in material culture (e.g. Appadurai, Kopytoff, Tilley, Miller) suggest the best way to study people is to study objects. This method could be radical in approach but arguably much fairer in the way it accounts for the social world. For example, authors working in this perspective assume that people do not simply socialize with each other, but their actions are intrinsically mediated by the very material world that surrounds them. Therefore, deeper cultural processes such as appropriation and objectification give further cultural significance to what people actually do. For example, in his study of clothes in Trinidad, Daniel Miller (1994) starts from the observation that a focus on objects, especially clothes, is usually considered superficial. At the root of this observation stands a fundamental differentiation between things and people, or in other terms between surfaces and profoundness. Making use of a whole range of historical and cultural issues such as the local conception of the body, the history of slavery, or the cultural manifestations related to the annual Caribbean carnival, Miller shows that much of what we understand regarding clothes could be an erroneous interpretation of surfaces. At the same time, the author suggests that by looking at the way people and objects live together and reciprocally define themselves, we could culturally transcend from the surface to the depth. In his ethnography, he argues that the opulent, apparently vulgar and disorganized style of dressing represents a powerful cultural modality to keep things at surface with the precise scope of avoiding harm in direct relation with the local concept of honesty. Through clothing, Trinidadians could understand a person much better than asking them directly what they are doing.

How, therefore, can material culture change the way we actually "see" the world? To what extent do the various objects we "see" and take for granted, especially those we "do not see", influence the way we live in and discuss the world? I will bring some substantive examples from my fieldwork in rural south-east Romania in order to discuss how the theoretical frame of my research grants access to a particular anthropological knowledge.

[8] For a reiteration of the debate see Vargas et al. (2008) and the proceedings of the conference "Tarde/ Durkheim: Trajectories of the Social" held between 14-15 March 2008 in Cambridge, UK.

Fieldwork

I conducted extensive fieldwork during 2009-10 in the eastern part of Bărăgan, namely in the Mostiştea Valley. For confidential reasons, I will not name the village here, and I will use fictive names for my interviewees. However, for the scope of this paper I would mention I chose the village on a fairly random basis, while looking at something average and "not interesting" in any particular way. This methodology is influenced by the material culture belief that fieldwork is actually rendering the ethnography interesting and meaningful. Therefore, the village with a population of around 2,500 was not engaged in work migration, ethnic or other social conflicts, while people were living in all possible conditions from utterly poor to extremely wealthy.[9]

I will keep these methodological assumptions in exploring an apparently mundane ethnographic example from the village. Elena is a woman in her fifties, married with Matei and mother of four. The couple does not like to work in the fields and they always avoided such work. Elena enjoys taking good care of her poultry and watches them most of the day while they pasture on the empty lot margining her house. From spring to autumn she takes care of the small vegetable garden in front of their house and, as with most women in the village, she washes a lot. Her biggest complaint is that unlike all her neighbours, she does not have a washing machine. She blames her husband of wasting too much money instead of buying a cheap second-hand washing machine. Nevertheless, she keeps hand washing the laundry for her big family almost as frequently as her neighbours that have a washing machine do. In my thesis I suggest that her attitude, like of many other people in the village, is not necessarily related to any transcendent notion of duty or cleanliness but rather to an equally fundamental quest for social meaning and worth.

Elena and her husband sold their cow around ten years ago. Like most of the people in the village they decided at some point they didn't need it anymore. They argued taking care of a cow required hard and dirty work, while they could not earn reasonable money by selling the milk and cheese it produced. In addition, Elena argued her children were grown-ups at the time, so they did not require so much milk anymore.[10] The next thing she regrets most, after not having a washing machine, is that her husband destroyed their good wooden fired oven from their backyard. She remembers the various breads, cakes and fruit pies she used to bake in that oven. She becomes melancholic when she remembers how easy her

[9] The majority of local people who considered themselves as being wealthy were entrepreneurs, such as the managers of some agricultural associations and other private businesses in the region.

[10] The two small sons were in school so they benefited from the state program (*cornul și laptele*) that guaranteed the daily distribution of one bottle of milk or yoghurt and a bread corn to all children in primary school.

husband destroyed (*fărâmat*) the oven. In a summer some five years ago, Matei was working with one of his sons-in-law to extend the roof of their house. The two men lacked all the materials they needed and with no money available, were forced to improvise. When Matei saw that because of the newly heightened rooftop, he had to also modify the chimney he thought that to use the good bricks from the oven was the most normal thing to do. It was a good oven, built about ten years before by some craftsmen who happened to pass by through the village, but nevertheless the man argued they didn't really used the oven like they used to. Then, he did not want to postpone his work for just a few bricks and argued he can build a new oven if they were to decide that they needed one in the future. Despite Elena's protests, her husband started to meticulously dismantle the outdoor oven. The men went on and finished their work in the same day.

So, what was the meaning of this sudden renouncement to what seemed to be a real asset in the household? What is the implication of the cow to the entire story? All the evidence in my fieldwork indicates that what Elena basically regrets or in contrast celebrates is not related to some fundamental "peasant rationality", that is people acting in the name of their customary practices, but rather to a very modern understanding of the notion of "peasant". She knows she could not afford baking at all. Without crops, a cow, and an oven, she would have to purchase or barter for the expensive ingredients and pay for the gas for the actual cooking. Elena even argues that the ingredients she could find in the local shop or that her daughters could bring from the nearby town or from a supermarket in Bucharest are not as tasty as the ones she used to produce herself when she used to bake in her garden. Nevertheless, her entire family is peculiarly passionate for the cookies, biscuits, Cola or sunflower seeds they use to buy in the local store. At the same time, she knows that the absence of the cow and to some extent of the oven frees her of a great deal of everyday responsibilities. This contradiction is fundamental in understanding why Elena and so many other people in the region hesitate between being "peasants" and "non-peasants". As she put it, "We wanted to modernize ourselves, but I remained with no oven". With no land, no cow, no stove, an unfinished house, and recently no job, Matei and Elena feel themselves trapped somewhere halfway to modernity. In the following sections of this paper I will discuss the local concepts of *value* and *work* that best account for the way people in the village actually understand modernity.

First, I will briefly discuss the way people relate to the notion of peasantry. I suggest that most of the people I encountered during the field manifested their different attitudes towards peasantry either by preserving or, on the contrary, strongly repudiating customary practices related to farming. There is one particular category of people that prefer to be known as *peasants* (*țărani*). Usually grouped alongside the notion of *gospodari*, these people aim at preserving or continuing what they see as customary peasant life. This does not relate to any specific period

in the history of peasantry,[11] but rather to the simple insistence in maintaining the familiar and the normative. *Gospodari* are not simply farmers, but also village teachers, priests, craftsmen, barbers, or postmen. They all argue they form the village "as it used to be", even if different generations have divergent opinions about such golden times. There is a certain normativity that drives the imperative of the "should be", for example how the local and religious beliefs should be respected, how people should behave, or how things should be done. I suggest such social exigency represents particular responses to peoples' concerns and anxieties.

At the same time, "non-peasants"[12] come to explicitly contest any pre-existing normative social order. Such people, which are usually very ambivalent about their "peasantness", from different reasons escaped the social exigency of the "should be". They are mainly the ones that at different moments in their lives were involved in activities and everyday practices outside the customary and normative system of obligation. For example, the communist period not only radically transformed property, work conditions in agriculture, or influenced rural-urban industrial migration, but with the command of new technologies and techniques as well as new notions of urgency it also brought radically new requirements and responsibilities to people in the village. Not only were many of them employed in industry during 1970s and 1980s, but some followed extended trainings and specialization in big urban centres, many had unprecedented access to new agricultural and industrial technology, while the majority had to formally accomplish secondary school education. I will not discuss here this but I want to suggest that during communism the new 'normative' was driven and supported by the socialist state that included a large part of the local population, for example people working in administration, education, managers of the state agricultural farms and people commuting to work in different industries. However, after the regime change, these emancipated possibilities found themselves conflicting with the exclusivity and prejudice of the "traditional" values. Many people have started different individual or familial projects aimed at a certain radical emancipation and reduction of the importance of agriculture in their family life, but the way they continued or accomplished such projects marked how socially successful or miserable they actually were in their attempts to move away from their undesired "peasantness".[13] In my work I look at how such people surround themselves by a vast array of new and conspicuous objects and practices while renouncing to their customary counterparts in order to defend or conquer particular social positions they claim to have "always" aspired for. Therefore, in using puzzling new objects and practices,

[11] As different conservatory or extreme right wing groups claim they could identify some.

[12] Of course, I differentiate between these two analytical categories just in order to work some theoretical frame. In fact, these categories are intermingled and most of the people I worked with are very ambiguous about them.

[13] I should note a strong difference between what people believed and their discursive usage of the word peasant.

people in fact attempt to deal with the most difficult abstract ideas of who they are and what they actually want to become. In the above ethnographic example, the fact that the family sold their cow and destroyed their stove should be judged together with the fact that they have never in fact finished renovating their house as they intended, nor have they purchased basic household goods such as a washing machine. Elsewhere (Nicolescu, 2011) I show how the entire household could stand as the objectification of the continuous tensions between the ideal of a *home* and the actual realization of the household.

In this apparently banal dispute at stake are conflicting views on how a life *should be* lived. People in the two categories accuse each other of "inconsistency" and of "rigidity", respectively. To reduce the entire argument to a simple opposition between "traditionalists" and "modernists" would mean to ignore the local specificities, the diversity of practices within each category, while offering a too broad and irrelevant perspective. I argue that the various disputes on the term peasant (*țăran*) mark a particular understanding of the modernization process of the village, while aiming not simply to a certain personal or collective idea of progress or development, but more important to an increased distancing from a normative sense of customary. This process is accompanied by blaring contestation and resistance that aim not necessarily to the normative in itself, but rather to the singularity of its social impositions. Therefore, the rejection or the lack of adaptation to the multiple options people see and want to be are abridged in the different uses of the word 'peasant.'

The question of value

There are many anthropological studies of post-socialist Romania that tend to relate the specific political and economic problems during postsocialism with broader Western or global issues (for example Burawoy, 1985; Verdery, 1996; Heintz, 2004, 2006; Kideckel, 2008; Gal and Kligman, 2000). A particular shift in value is traced by Verdery throughout the entire transformation period of the 1990s. She argues that if land began as an often hypothetical store of wealth, as well as an embodiment of social relations and status (2003: 25-31), it was continually revaluated, as people increasingly failed in their cultivation plans. Still, people were trapped between the strong desire to keep it and the desperate need for cash, meant to assure the cultivation of a minimum parcel. During this period, selling land was often regarded as a social admission of defeat and a rupture with their family's past. Gradually, land lost its specificity as it entered the large fields of "super-tenants", whence its product would return to its owners as bits of the average harvest and the standard rent, regardless of the quality of their parcel (2003: 357). My fieldwork suggests that the Romanian peasants in the village began to appropriate the newly imposed system of value by the first years of 2000s.

In contrast to 1990s, I argue that during 2000s land ceased to be a store of value in financial and social terms, as a result of an increasing process of commodification.[14] The peasants' notion of value could be further traced throughout new and always problematic market mechanisms, such as land, crops, and household insurance. Pressed between the European Union regulations and the systematic refusal of its people to contract insurances, the recent governments attempted several times to introduce such financial mechanisms. Resistance to adopt these mechanisms is to be understood by an incomplete transformation in people's notion of value. Traditionally, a completely different set of values replace a crop loss; the primacy of these customary values consist in the fact that they are primordially attached to moral virtues, as well as in the certitude of their constant and reassured practice, rather than in any economical or uncertain principles of a particular transient market. The same is true for the entire household, and for any activity people are involved in. The practice of these customary values within their own *habitus*, reassure the peasant not only against the present, but more important about the future. How could money or commodities replace such transcendental values? What would be the impact of such social changes on the local notion of work?

Work as category and work as burden

In all languages, form ancient Greek to medieval French or Spanish, the etymology of the word 'work' denotes some painful activity, even torture or different despised devices and practices related for example to repetitive animal work (Godelier and Ignatieff 1980). Different political systems attempted over the last two centuries or so to turn work into something acceptable, or even into a noble activity. In my thesis I criticize Marxist theories of work and value as being very far from what people actually call work and valuable.[15] As Kopytoff argued, the nineteenth and twentieth century social sciences have "preferred to see labour not as an existential issue but merely as a curse to be gradually lifted by social and technological progress" (1994: 222).

While Marxist literature essentially assumes that in traditional societies work was usually considered as integral (and therefore non-problematic) part of the overall cultural or social system, Sahlins (1972) described work as radically opposed to any human organic need. In this tradition, Bourdieu (1977) discussed work through countless everyday objects and practices. Material culture studies

[14] This 'new subjectification' (Verdery, 2003: 360) should be judged in close relation with other social phenomena that emerged starting the end of 1990s until today: massive migration for work of the young population, most importantly transnational labour migration and emigration to Western countries.

[15] In their ideological pursuit of *work*, these studies missed the *worker*. A critique of such approaches is to be found in the vast postmodern literature, which at its turn was influenced by different contemporaneous critiques such as post-colonialism or orientalism.

attempted to construct their own understanding of work. They refused to use work as an analytical category.[16] Instead, they used theoretical frames such as embodiment or objectification to ascribe cultural meaning to the social facts. Following this line of thought, in my ethnography I am looking to the social actors not primarily as peasants, workers or family members, but as individuals engaged in social processes by which they actually structure or deny any of the above categories.

Following Marx's approach on the object as the intellectual appropriation of the real world by a set of practices, theoretical, aesthetic, religious, ethical, or technical, or more specifically the appropriation of the real object by the object of knowledge (Althusser and Balibar, 1979), I address the question: what is the object of the Romanian peasant? I suggest that if such an internal object or representation would exist, for sure it would not be called "work", nor "leisure", but rather cow, corn, potato, or television. Therefore, in my ethnography I wasn't primarily interested in distinguishing between work and non-work, but rather in the way the cow did actually oblige the peasant to milk it, as the fields or back garden did oblige him to work. Then, how does the potato-less peasant look like? What is the existential relation between potato and television? If by potato-less peasants I mean people that for one reason or another lost their land, or simply the propensity to work it, we may easily find the relation with a larger set of social matters, including, for example, family and media. In such a material culture approach, I have the liberty of choosing between the available theoretical tools and concepts and combine them in a framework that would render them meaningful for the people I worked with. I follow here so many authors that do not see the relevance of theory if it does not serve people (e.g. famously Thompson, 1978).

It has been argued that for the Romanian peasant work or non-work are not goals in themselves (e.g. Bernea, 2005), but rather everyday existential practices that happen to take place in between his products (crops, different phases of growth) and his consumption of such products. In the fieldwork, I was particularly interested in the relation between such apparently loose activities and the authoritative *rost* (appropriate translation could be a sort of sacred 'meaning'). It has been argued also that traditionally the Romanian peasants do something only if there is a *rost* to do it, that means if there is any moral rationale in engaging with it (Mihăilescu, 2009). As we have seen, this engagement should be explored in relation with the fundamental shift in the local notions of value. Which are then the local ways to appropriate or contest the social and cultural changes imposed by modernity? How distinct are these ways within the community, and how do they relate with the new local conscience?

[16] As they did with key notions such as kinship or identity.

Rural modernity

This paper was inspired by one of my first puzzles in the field. I was astonished to see how little people were involved in daily activities and routines that used to constitute their major source of income only a few years before. The vast majority of the personal agricultural fields were worked by the few local agricultural associations and the private farms in the region, the number of livestock had decreased spectacularly, while the classical agricultural products such as corn and wheat changed their status from a primary resource for the household to a mere commodity in the economy of exchange. The highly gendered work and the locality of kinship all raised important trans-generational conflicts and anxieties on issues such as the transfer of authority, prestige, or simply the social norms on being a good wife and mother. At the same time, television and new media such as mobile phones and the Internet represented competitive alternatives to the customary practices and new access to social status.

Throughout the paper, I have argued that it is not useful to use classical concepts such as value and work in order to account for the social transformations, since these very concepts are challenged and rendered with new social meanings. In other words, what really becomes important is to follow the potato's journey from plough to fork. And the technologies that actually make it. By doing that, we efface the "traditional"; we deconstruct any (pre)loaded expression while being most able to explore the "actual" potato and peasant. I argue that the peasant is surrounded by an interminable array of material culture that is meaningfully arranged in the cosmological order of the village and basically oblige people to work or simply do nothing. For example work should be judged in relation to the quantity and quality of the material resources people dispose and can make use of. If the selling of the cow is modern, many times the plough is not, but it is the meeting, or indeed the separation, between these objects and the people using them that give the latter a sense of whom they actually are.

I argue the new social understanding of work and value grant people a particular sense of modernity. I draw on Habermas (1987) who, at an individual level, sees modernity as an unprecedented and fundamentally new project, whose "only source of normativity (...) is the principle of subjectivity from which the very time-consciousness of modernity arose" (1987: 41). In his work on modernity, Daniel Miller (1994) explores how a similar newly gained self-consciousness relates to the local appropriation of modernity. He argues that the new consciousness of the present and its separation from the past equates with a radical rupture in the sense of the customary, that puts an end to a given legitimizing tradition or order that saw everything as a continuity "with the way things have always been" (1994: 62).

In the context of rapid social and economic transformations in Romania, currently driven mainly by the problematic adaptation to a complex European

ethic and identity, I suggest that the rural space represents the locus *par excellence* where the recently assembled consciousness of the present is mostly challenged. I understand modernity and the modern time-consciousness under this perspective: a permanent attempt for reflexivity of the subject not only against what it has become (that is, what he or she actually is) but also as an enduring interrogation of how this becoming is permanently and incessantly shifting away from the past.

Methodologically, people are much more reluctant of speaking about themselves than speaking about their everyday objects. In this paper I showed how a material culture approach in ethnography that allows these objects and the associated social practices to talk at their turn about people. Such method not only shortcuts many practical disadvantages and misleads of fieldwork but also grants the anthropologist with privileged access to the social. The privilege resides in the methodological and theoretical freedom material culture essentially provides to the social actors.

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GROUNDING GLOBAL CAPITALISM IN CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA. ON TERRITORIALIZATION AND THE QUESTION OF AGENCY

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ABSTRACT. The article discusses Nokia's presence in Romania after the translocation of its production plant from Germany, as a case-study that allows a twofold approach. First, I focus my analysis on territoriality and spatial processes related to global capitalism. Second, I argue for the importance of local power articulations and of the embeddedness of key actors in a particular social and economic context. While generally globalization studies imagine processes in terms meta power-relations, I show how agents and their political imaginaries are crucial for understanding phenomena that are often seen as the impersonal workings of the rationality of capital.

Keywords: globalization studies, transnational corporations, territorialization, scales, agency

Introduction

"At Nokia our values are the foundation and people the core. We offer a workplace with a world of opportunities, engaging work, global culture and competitive rewards. Together, we achieve" (see www.nokia.com). And they do. They reach for the global, they provide jobs and they are competitive. One of their strategies is to transfer production plants, so that on the 26th of March 2007 Nokia released the news that it was planning to close its factory in Bochum, Germany, and relocate the unit near Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The company disclosed its search for new and cheaper labor markets and its intention to shift the production towards the East.

Beyond the fact that transnational corporations can be considered "the most important single force creating global shifts in economic activity" (Dicken, 1992: 47), I argue that the way they function in relation to different economic and political institutions at various levels allows a better understanding of contemporary capitalism in relation to space and to territoriality. I use the strand of literature which critically engages this subject because it clarifies why and how it is necessary to move beyond the mere spatiality of the capitalist phenomena. I put forward the idea that the material dimension renders an incomplete picture of particular

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cases and inherently of the macro mechanisms, especially when approached from a more grounded perspective. Thus I argue for the necessity of bringing in the analysis those elements related to the vernacular imaginary of global capitalism, the officialdom around foreign direct investments, and the local power configurations created by central actors.

The present work consists of two main sections which trace the previously mentioned dimensions. The first deals with the political economy of space. I draw on Neil Smith and David Harvey's works to raise several questions regarding the conceptual corollaries of teritorialization: de-territorialization, re-territorialization and the notion of scales. The subsequent section deals with the official accounts and articulations of the investment story and with the key public actors who had a say in the unfolding of the events which make up the Nokia case. Throughout the article, I engage with the notion of agency by hinting at the multiple ways in which it can manifest.

I mainly use official data, accessible either in the press or on the websites of different public institutions. Given that the second section focuses more on the particular articulations of the story, it relies on a detailed account provided by two local daily newspapers. I have investigated the archives of the issues of the independent daily *Făclia*, and daily *Ziua de Cluj*, belonging to a national media trust, from March 2007 until the beginning of 2011. The empirical material used here represents part of a larger research project which deals with the ideological forces at work in the reception of and reactions to this investment by narrowing down the narrative of late capitalism to a focus on its contextually constructed meanings. Although the previous research also used substantive interviews, I will adapt to the purpose and economy of this article and refer only to the publicly available information and to the media analysis in order to outline and discuss the present case study.

Nokia's 'landing' in Romania

Concerning the motivations behind this resettlement, the media offer information revealing the possible levels of decision structures. The company's officials, the mayor of Cluj-Napoca and representatives of the county council, state officials (president and prime-minister) have their say on the reasons why the investment is welcome and how it is beneficial for both sides, but most of all they offer a clue about which institutions are involved in the process.

According to the company officials' statements, the decision is a reflection of Nokia's strong volume growth globally, as well as the increasing demand for mobile devices in Europe. According to the same sources, "Nokia selected Cluj as the location for the plant because of several characteristics of the space, infrastructure and the county's availability of skilled labor, its good inbound and outbound logistics

connections, its overall efficiency, and the long industrial tradition in the area" (Kaunistola, 2007). The mayor of Cluj-Napoca at the time, Emil Boc, and several representatives of the county council were happy to announce the number of jobs that will be offered and manifested their trust in Nokia's reassurance regarding further investments. Similarly, Prime Minister Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu expressed his confidence in this economic development opportunity and assured that the project benefits from the full support of his cabinet as regards the infrastructure of the region. During one of the inaugurations of the Jucu plant, he stated: "The Nokia factory contributes to a new dimension of Romania's future" (*Făclia*, Sept. 25th 2008). This was the second inauguration and it was overrun with politicians - representatives of the ministries of Transports, of Education, leaders of some of the local and national political parties, and representatives of the county councils gathered to the surprise of the company's officials. Randomly or not, the event took place on the eve of the parliamentary elections at the end of 2008 and the first inauguration happened at the beginning of the same year right before the local elections. "Next time it will be at the presidential elections", the joke echoes on.

Some of the objective reasons that lie behind this decision of translocation have to do with a series of advantages that the Romanian state offered in exchange for the financial investments in the area and the increased number of job offers: an extended network of utilities and roads that will imply a total investment of 750 million Euros in order to connect Cluj to other important cities in the area, the extension and modernization of the airport, and 1 million square meters of land for free use for building the industrial park. Out of an immediate investment of 60 million Euros for facilities of the industrial park, 50 millions will be supported by the Romanian government and the rest by the local and district resources. Therefore, the state trades space and improved infrastructure for 3500 jobs as concrete and relatively immediate benefits, as well as probable subsequent investments from other companies and providers.

Through a different lens, the arrangement is considerably less clear cut. The terms of the deal between the Romanian state and the corporation are informal insofar as there is no legal sanction to be enforced on the company in case of contract breach. Nokia's walk out of Bochum was viewed by the German officials as "behaving like a subsidy locust" (www.dw-world.de) thus alongside a lack of clear cut, fully operating legislation in the matter as a general state of things, the conspicuous example of Germany did not seem to stand as warning. The fact that the Romanian government ignored the dissent and unemployment left behind by Nokia, the lack of a long term cost-benefit analysis of these investments, and the undisputable trust in the company's promises can only add up to a less rosy picture than the politicians seem to promote and hope for.

The making of a metropolitan area and the real estate business

The urban development plan of Cluj-Napoca involves the creation of a metropolitan area including the other seventeen localities of the region. According to the general urban plan, the major restructuring involves the administrative reorganization, as well as infrastructure improvements in order to facilitate the coordination between residential areas, and those with service and production functions. The area should work at full capacity by 2013, and it entails the construction and improvement of access roads, introducing new public transportation means, and offering access to basic facilities in all the integrated villages (www.zonametropolitanacluj.ro). The final configuration of this area shows the importance that the regional scale has from several points of view: economic, political, and territorial. The region's administration adopted certain strategies in order to increase its chances of receiving substantial EU funding for further development and subsequently the possibility to attract more investments. Also the county's representatives used the region's land as an essential asset which became an equally important incentive for the company since they could use it tax free. Thus these three dimensions – political, economic, and territorial – find their expression in administrative policies, strategies for capital attraction, and real estate handling. The direction of development in the region is shaped by the politics of a supra national agency (EU in this case) from which it tries to extract funding. It is also directly influenced by the way different TNCs shape their production strategies.

As soon as the news of the investment got out and the setting was agreed on, the village of Jucu became the "promised land"[1]. The first articles were forecasting the evolution of the land prices around and inside what was to become the industrial park. After Nokia announced its plans of building a production center, several institutions, business people, politicians, real estate developers, and service providers were competing over the available hectares. The land price doubled in a matter of weeks and there were news about a major investment in a housing complex. The villagers in Jucu soon started pressuring the authorities to release them the land ownership entitlements which had been dragged for a long time. There were several corruption scandals related to the release of these documents and the main protagonist was the mayor of Jucu. His case and trial were followed up by *Făclia* which proclaimed him "a collateral victim of the Nokia investment" (*Făclia*, July 30th 2008). He admitted to the bribery accusations so he was convicted, and excluded from the Democratic Party. For the same reason of skyrocketing prices, Jucu was called the ground zero of real estate speculations in Cluj.

The peak of this period was reached in the summer of 2008, when prices reached 100 Euros per square meter. By the autumn several developers started to build hundreds of houses in Jucu because "this is where the industry will be

[1] An article published on March 30th in *Ziua de Cluj* held the title: "Jucu, the promised land"

relocated and there will be a considerable housing demand", as one of the investors said. By December almost all transactions came to a halt and "El Dorado from Jucu remained just a memory"[2] – prices plummeted, constructions stagnated, and deals were canceled. Very soon an explanatory discourse emerged and generated a commonsensical understanding of the mechanisms which led to this state of affairs. First of all, it was the economic recession which affected the real estate sector. Then, more specifically, it was the "artificial" increase in prices which was generated by the hype around Nokia, as one of the managers of a real estate agency said: "the buyers have disappeared, the demands in the residential sector have been decimated, and the speculative enthusiasm has vanished." (*Ziua de Cluj*, June 8th 2009) The irony regarding these speculations which were basically generated people's impression of growth, enrichment, development, were partly the reasons which brought to an end the investors' interest in Cluj – the land prices became too high to make an investment profitable enough. What development is for people is no development for investors.

Telecommunication fluxes and Nokia Village. On losing ground and scaling globalization

The concept of de-territorialization (Harvey, 1985) had been inspired by Marx's idea of "annihilation of space by time" (Marx, 2005 [1857]: 539) and it is based on indubitable historical changes: technological innovations, informational advancement, and the emergence of political and economic supra structures which regulate trade conditions among states. Space-time compression exists due to the spreading of the informational technology and due to the loosening of physical barriers and state frontiers. In this context the concept of space of capitalist flows gives a broad and visual perspective on the logic of capital circulation.

However, neither Brenner (1999) nor Harvey (1985) argue for such an understanding of today's phase of globalization or of the contemporary capitalist geopolitics, at least not without highlighting the nuances of the processes. Brenner admits that the de-territorialization approach makes a leap forward in overcoming a part of the state-centrism's shortcomings, but its major disadvantage is that it "brackets the various forms of spatial fixity, localization, and (re)territorialization upon which global flows are necessarily premised" (Brenner, 1999: 62). The sub-global scales are failed to be accounted for, hence failing to explain the unquestionable territorial reconfigurations which are easily observable from a more empirical, grounded perspective.

In contrast, Harvey (1985) focuses on how the processes of spatial-temporal compression can take place only through the production of socio-geographical infrastructure specific to one historical period, like urban built environments,

[2] Title of an article published on December 4th 2008 in *Ziua de Cluj*.

industrial agglomerations, regional production complexes, large scale transportation infrastructure, long distance communication networks, and state regulatory institutions (Harvey, 1985). For Harvey de-territorialization is not a macro scale process but rather a specific phase of the capital's circulation before searching for a spatial fix. His theory highlights the dialectical relationship between the territorial and capitalistic logics of power – the former refers to the political strategies used in the name of a territorially defined entity such as a state, while the latter "focuses on the ways in which economic power flows across and through continuous space towards or away from territorial entities" (Harvey, 2005: 82). As opposed to Brenner, this disjunction enables him to emphasize the spatial metaphor of capital flows, giving this way a more in-depth explanation of how capitalism works at the intersection between political powers, economic interests, and how space is reconfigured and resituated in the process.

Brenner is right to argue that these theories do not mention the capital's necessity for spatial fixes and the processes of territorial reconfigurations produced by the capital circulation; this happens due to the lack of a more localized perspective which diverts the theorists from reaching more critical and qualitative-oriented investigations. Nevertheless, what has been termed de-territorialization is not void of empirical substance, but the conceptualization should follow a different logic; according to Brenner, de-territorialization "must be viewed as a distinctively geographical accumulation strategy, a mechanism of *global localization,* through which globally oriented capitalist firms are attempting to restructure the nationally organized systems" (Brenner, 1999: 64).

An organization like Nokia is constantly in need of searching for new markets, for cheaper materials and labor force triggering a constant expansion and translocations of production plants. The Finnish corporation has sites for research and development, manufacturing and sales on three continents throughout the world, proving the necessity to render spatiality less and less significant. One phase of de-territorialization takes place when a country joins the European Union, making the traffic of commodities and persons considerably easier through softer regulations and more similar legal systems. After Romania joined the EU. in 2007, the borders were easier to be crossed and the barriers became less "real" for direct foreign capital investment. In other words, the constant supervision and strict impositions set for Romania by the EU as conditions for joining can be understood as what Brenner saw in de-territorialization – "a geographical accumulation strategy" (Brenner, 1999). Hence the environment for business had been set up for Nokia.

One alternative to the back and forth of this discussion on territorialization is through conceptualizing these transformations in terms of scales. In my understanding, the idea of scale entails the comprehension of both the notion of territoriality and its role in political agency, enabling an understanding of how different levels are shifting, instead of seeing them as static. It also allows discerning the gradation of importance that these levels have, and discussing why this is the

case. Brenner stated that "the contemporary round of globalization has radically reconfigured the scalar organization of territorialization under capitalism, relativizing the significance of the national scale while simultaneously intensifying the role of both sub- and supra-national forms of territorial organization" (Brenner, 1999: 52). On this matter, Saskia Sassen also sees the increasing importance of sub- and supra-national scales. Although the emergent globalization of economic activity seems to suggest that place no longer matters, she argues that this trend is only half of what is happening in the global and digital age. Alongside with the dispersal of economic activities, centralized territorial nodes are growing (Sassen, 2001). Whether these recent theories formulate the issues in terms of "shifting scales", "jumping scales" (Smith, 1995: 101), or "re-scaling" (Swyngedouw, 1997: 155), their major advantage is that of being able to offer a sharp qualitative understanding coupled with a localized analysis.

Moreover, Brenner argues for the crucial role that states actually have: this round of globalization is "a multi-scalar process of de-territorialization in which states play crucial roles" (Brenner, 1999: 42); states are not inactive in the globalizing process and they remain after all the "fixed geographical infrastructures upon, within, and through which global flows circulate" (Brenner, 1999: 67). Of course, the importance of the state is highlighted as opposed to globalist and de-territorialist approaches, but in terms of scales, the national level is clearly relativized. How is this contradiction solved if we think about Nokia's case in Romania?

Clearly, the negotiations over the translocation's conditions were held between the corporation's and the county's representatives; although part of the funding came from national agencies, the construction projects and the flourishing economy were Cluj's responsibility and benefits. This confirms the relative role that the national level has on such decisions. Of course, the state remains the provider of space and infrastructure where the capital finds the spatial fix it needs. However, when it comes to looking at the state's function in the globalizing process I argue that a few things should be taken into consideration before simply calling it an agent. Taking the case at hand, I argue that Romania does not have the resources to negotiate in the real sense of the word and will use important funds to improve the business climate and almost gladly accept the conditions and rush into accommodating the needs of the company. It is important not to lose sight of the national level in terms of power structures and political entity as well as importance of its territory as different epistemologies bluntly did, but reiterating the crucial role that states have in globalization processes can be hazardous without taking into account first and foremost the type of states we are talking about. In a similarly blunt way, I would say that while some states produce globalization, others adapt to or resist it, depending on the resources. Economic, political or of another type, these resources constitute what I would term negotiation capital.

Of course it could be argued that in the end both Germany and Romania had almost no leverage in the decisions of the company. However, there are noteworthy differences in the way these states related to the company. In Bochum the impact on the labor market and on the living standard were beneficial and sensible. After Nokia announced its plans to leave, the severance pay and other compensation expenses were paid, while the moral issue translated into protests of the former employees and resentful statements of several politicians. This situation comes in stark contrast with what the Cluj administration was able and willing to do, as I will gradually present in the following sections. For now this difference plugs into the idea that negotiation capital is an important factor, especially when one tries to analyze the role of a particular state in globalization processes and its relationship with the transnational capital.

The national scale is shrinking but to a great extent it depends on where that country is positioned in terms of negotiation capital. A developed state which is influential in supra national organizations will definitely stand on more advantageous positions in negotiations with a potential corporation than a state which depends on IMF's structural adjustment programs, a state whose existence is believed to be dependent on foreign investments. Romania's "negotiations" with Nokia were in fact reducible to seeing if the state has the necessary funds for improving the infrastructure or not and if the representatives of Cluj county council are willing to invest in the project; happy to receive massive investments, all that had to be done was to find the resources to sustain the regional development to facilitate the company's activity. Given that the safety net for the future employees was completely overlooked stands as evidence that not much was considered by the state of the county council. Soon after the company started production, the negotiations for increased wages began. Moreover, the number of promised employments was never achieved.

Moreover, by the time I ended the research of this particular story, Nokia announced the closing of its production plant in Cluj-Napoca and the translocation further towards the East, to the Asian continent. According to the agreement between the municipality and the company, Nokia was supposed to start contributing to the local budget through various taxes starting with 2012. In light of these new developments several questions are rendered even more conspicuous. Why did the mobilization and resources of all institutional agents seem to be done so seamlessly? How is it that the process was so smooth and the willingness of politicians was never challenged? What created the conditions which make the territorial transformations of the capital accumulation strategies be taken for granted to such an extent? The following section deals with these issues in detail.

Financing development

The impact of Nokia's presence in the Romanian economic environment is visible in terms of how the funding was deemed, used and implemented. The urgency to finish some of the projects, the smooth cooperation between agencies and authorities at various administrative levels, as well as the easiness of finding the necessary funds, represented decisive factors in Nokia's investment. There are three main aspects in this section which are relevant to the articulation of the actual workings involved in such an investment – the project of the industrial park, transport-related projects, and types of urban reorganization. The first two speak about the material transformations that the city of Cluj went through as triggered by Nokia's arrival, while the last aspect is relevant for the ways in which the regions are re-organized and re-imagined according to the European Union requirements and conditions for funding.

Tetarom III, the industrial park in which Nokia organized its production, is the largest of the three parks[3] in the county, expanding on 120 hectares. Given the initial estimates of 300 million Euros worth of investments in this park, much of the financial and administrative efforts were channeled to this area, mainly those of the local administration, but also the Government's. The role of the county administration was clearly drawn when the prime-minister underlined the necessary involvement of the local authorities in making the investment happen, assuring them of the center's full support. The evaluation of the City Council regarding the funds needed to build the infrastructure in Tetarom III indicated a figure which came close to 30 million Euros. The amount was covered both from governmental funds and from local ones[4]. After receiving one round of funding from the Ministry of Public Finances, Marius Nicoară then president of the County Council, stated:

> We would still need another 3, 5 – 4 million Euros. But you cannot win unless you invest, like in any other field. That is why, together with the Government, we have decided to invest 30 million Euros in Tetarom III because starting from 2010 this investment will bring to the state budget an annual income of 100 million from various taxes. (*Ziua de Cluj*, July 3rd 2007)

According to the official records[5] of the County Council the revenues remained far from reaching this sum. Part of the reason is the decision of the administration (taken as early as January 2008) to exempt the company from all taxes for land and buildings for the next thirty years. The other reasons are the

[3] They are organized as a state company subordinated to the County Council whose main function is to provide all the necessary infrastructure and facilities for the companies which have production centers there. The County Council is the main shareholder.

[4] It is hard to tell what share offered each institution because there are no official reports and the press offers divergent data about these amounts.

[5] http://www.cjcluj.ro/buget/ (last accessed June 2011)

fact that the Nokia Village remained unfinished and the fact that there were few potential investors in the industrial park. Thus, the initial estimations of the Romanian authorities were rendered inaccurate.

Relevant other efforts of the county administration to facilitate Nokia's production logistics are related to a connecting highway, a goods train station in Jucu, and the extension of the airport. The highway had been already under construction when the deal with Nokia was sealed but the endeavors were visible to the extent that the project changed in order to include an express road to connect Jucu and Cluj (although it was not part of the understanding with Nokia). Moreover, the progression of works on the highway was encouraged from the center, both financially and politically. The director of NCHNR – *The National Company for Highways and National Roads* (Compania Nationala de Autostrazi si Drumuri Nationale) was very straightforward about the significance of this venture:

> No matter if the Government changes or not, the urban highway is a project of infrastructure which will carry on. I do not think that any politician would assume this political risk of stopping it. There are important investments in Cluj and the only thing you would get in case you interfere is the revolt of an entire county. (*Ziua de Cluj*, Sept. 2nd 2008)

The imaginary which facilitates this type of statements entails a given hierarchy in which the economic supersedes the political, and in which the will of an actor or one's political interests should not stand in the way of development which is to be achieved through such investments. Moreover, the will of a population is assumed as cohesive and encouraging of such investments and the political support is understood as directly dependent on a politician's efforts and readiness to support these ventures. The other two projects meant to aid the logistics of Nokia were generated and sustained by the same logic.

In June 2007 the airport began to undergo extensive redevelopment works for being modernized and for acquiring a new arrival terminal. Though this project was neither part of the agreement with Nokia, nor was it initiated particularly for the company, the local administration reacted in accordance with the 'expansion flow' in which it found itself at the time. The numerous investments and steep growth of the 2006 and 2007 made local authorities set in motion ambitious, simultaneous projects of this sort. Similarly, the construction in Jucu of a new station for freight train was operational by October 2008, mostly with the financial help of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. The Minister declared that the funds were not considerable, "but they represent necessary investments for the support of other investments". Taking for granted the idea that by financing investments one finances development implies a very strong correlation between an unstable process and an ambiguous notion. Foreign direct investments are very loosely regulated and the control on the side of the host country is close to insignificant, making these region-transforming processes extremely unstable.

Similarly, the idea of development is in most of the cases vaguely employed, but what remains axiomatic is that the state's support for and facilitation of foreign investments will bring about development.

In addition to the material transformations generated by Nokia's presence there were several projects which targeted the administrative reorganization of the county and that of the larger region encompassing Cluj. As mentioned, the main purpose of these endeavors is the absorption of European funds and they represent the expression of the tendencies of regionalization and rescaling characteristic to the present workings of capitalism. The two most salient projects of this kind are the Metropolitan Area, and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA henceforth). The former is an older plan of the local administration which was taken up again towards the end of 2008. This happened when the municipal and the county councils agreed upon solving their differences and started to cooperate for the constitution of the Metropolitan Area. Once Cluj became one of the eight national poles of development, the formation of the Metropolitan Area became a must in order to access 80 million Euros non-reimbursable funds from the European Union. According to the general urban plan, the major restructuring involves the administrative reorganization, as well as infrastructure improvements in order to facilitate the coordination between residential areas and those with service and production functions. The area should work at full capacity by 2013, and it entails the association of the city of Cluj-Napoca with seventeen neighboring localities, and a total population of 380 000. Part of its explicit purposes[6] is the increase in economic competitivity by means of attracting strategic investors, enhancing of entrepreneurial capacity, and stimulating the concentration of enterprises with regional tradition. The funding is accessed through the Regional Operational Programme (ROP), which represents the same EU tool for the implementation of regional development within North-West Development Agency.

This Agency entails the association of six counties without a juridical personality, being simply an open accord between the counties. According to the explanations offered on the Ministerial website, the idea of regional development "looks to encourage economic activities, the stimulation of investments in the private sector, the decrease of unemployment rate, which lastly but not least will lead to an improvement of living standards."[7] Although these projects are not directly linked to the case at hand they speak about the larger framework in which Nokia's presence was received and dealt with. Similarly their existence and endorsement by Governmental agencies reveals the ways in which Romania is complying with EU directives and guidance for the main reasons of achieving economic growth and reducing of development lags within the state and within

[6] http://www.cjcluj.ro/zona-metropolitana-urbana/
[7] http://www.mdrl.ro/index.php?p=159

EU states. Moreover, the unfolding of this territorial reorganization reveals the coordinates of a supra-national economic imaginary at the level of officialdom with direct implications for the ways in which development is envisioned and pursued in Romania and particularly in the region of Cluj.

Agency along the structure. Talking investment

I argue that in the case at hand agency has more to do with supporting of the structural forces as opposed to the usual connotation of the term which implies some sort of resistance or dissent. Nevertheless, discussing its role is equally important insofar as it shapes perceptions and enhances the manifestations of the global in the local. There is consistency to the political will regarding this investment and any discord is overcome for the economic wellbeing of the region. I believe that this *institutional agency* is not merely the sum of individual wills and actions of particular individuals, but it transcends immediate interests, political divisions, or the idea of singularity, single-handedness. Institutional agency refers to those establishments, state apparatus or parts of it, formal actors (public or private) which are active in directing projects (economic, social, etc.) and influencing their results. Agency in this particular case is revealed in complex configurations.

For Romania the Nokia affair was not much of a subject of discussions or analysis among authorities. As noted, things seemed to have been reduced to checking the amount of incentives and subsidies that could be offered to the company. Thus I believe that the so called negotiations were never properly conducted, a fact which leads us to the question of the state's leverage in the matter. Therefore the idea of negotiation capital proves to be important for a more nuanced understanding of the relations between states/regions and the economic forces – TNCs.

My second line of arguing for a different approach in territorialization studies involves the necessity for a closer look at the political culture, the way politicians present the stories of investment and how they are perceived. In this particular case I use political culture to refer to the reactions and general perception of such events which are more or less readable in mainstream media, political discourse, practical administrative measures and level of funding. One could get a clear grasp of these reactions which usually manifest in enthusiastic formulations about Romania's bright future, skyrocketing rates of employment, and unrestrained development on all levels. However audacious this statement may seem, there is not only a generalized acceptance but also an embracing of any investment of the sort which is believed to attract (almost magically) a higher standard of living, an endless flow of investments, or a "natural" economic growth.

As long as the immediate and practical advantages for the politicians in a case such as Nokia's investment are hard to argue against (more electoral, social

capital and the implicit perks), there is a new light shed on the way they handle the situation. They know that linking their name with the investment will bring personal and immediate advantages in terms of popularity. Moreover their job in convincing the voters that the investment is a win-win situation is like a knife cutting through butter. But what simplifies this for them to such an extent is a more interesting question. The reason why their rhetorical strategies work so smoothly is because of the "global imaginations" (Burawoy, 2000) which had already shaped for the electorate the importance of connections with the capital and priorities of the state in the matter. The process is significantly simplified by these "conceptions of the global" (Burawoy, 2000: 238) and what the officials' tactics actually come down to is the level of rhetorical devices. Their role is to make a convincing case out of their own connection with the investment and also to find the necessary resources to create incentives for the TNCs.

Global imaginations also translate into perceptions about the role of supra national entities, significance of the state's membership and what that brings along. Imagining the global has been considerably easier and the effects of that should be taken into account. The manner in which politicians can present their electoral campaigns is also influenced by the configurations of global imaginations and this is the reason for which I think that the corollary actions related to this should be tracked in a more detailed inquiry.

There were two main events which put into perspective the position of the national officialdom with regard to the investment. One of them was created by the voiced opposition of a Romanian deputy to transfer the land in Jucu into the private property of Nokia. The other episode has to do with the international wave of reactions triggered by Nokia shutting down the Bochum factory. The political imaginary which includes foreign investments and the working of today's capitalism surfaces unambiguously in these two situations.

The first event which disturbed the normal administrative and political procedures related to the investment was occasioned by one member of the Democratic Party who opposed the change in ownership and land use entitlements for the future industrial park. Legally it belonged to the Ministry of Education and it was under the administration of the University of Agriculture Sciences and Veterinarian Medicine in Cluj for purposes of research and practical exercise for students. Valeriu Tabără, who is also the vice-president of his party group in the Chamber of Deputies, took a stance against the idea of transferring the land from the University administration to the County Council and then to Nokia. His opposing statement in the plenary meeting created a wave of distress among his colleagues and deputies from the other parties. Emil Boc, president of the Democratic Party and mayor of Cluj-Napoca at the time, had the promptest reaction saying that his position was merely an individual position, with no mandate from the party, and that he will "recommend an evaluation of the situation created by his political

attitude and the application of all necessary penalties". (*Ziua de Cluj*, June 6th 2007) The revolt against Tabără's position was even better captured in a National Liberal Party member's statement:

> To the surprise of everyone in the room, the representatives of the DP have tried by contemptible ploys and invoking the most hilarious reasons of all, to introduce the idea that this project should be rejected. I wish to warn all the people in Cluj that the DP members, out of purely political ambitions and with an unexplainable stubbornness, opposed today an investment which will positively mark the long term development of Cluj, an investment which will create approximately 15 000 jobs and it will attract many other prominent companies to the county of Cluj. (*Făclia*, June 7th 2007)

Thus Tabără's stance triggered disorder in the plenary meeting and the vote which would regulate the land status in Nokia's favor was in danger. Ironically, the situation was salvaged with the intervention of Cluj's former mayor, Gheorghe Funar, and with the help of the Social Democrat Party's present members who managed to delay the final vote for a later date. Funar argued that the DP members do not want this investment to happen but that his party will support it and this is the reason why he intervened. In the press the incident was referred to as "the recent sample of idiocy" and it was considered yet another proof that the politicians in Cluj "do not pull the same carriage", they are not able to synchronize for the sake of a "vital investment for the county". (*Făclia*, June 7th 2007)

Further on, the lack of consistent reprimanding for Tabără raised questions about the authenticity of DP's willingness to make the investment happen and even brought about the questioning of its leadership legitimacy. According to Tabără, who found himself in a defensive position, explained his reasons saying that:

> Out of principle I do not agree with transferring public land to a private company, especially that which is destined to research and education. I speak solely in my name. I am a professor and I know that the situation of the agricultural patrimony should be resolved in its advantage. Academic research could have also produced jobs if it were properly supported. (*Ziua de Cluj*, June 1st 2007)

On a different occasion he said that he is not in any way against foreign investments, especially if they are serious and this is definitely the case with Nokia. However he argued that public property has the same importance as the private one, if not a greater one since it serves the public interest. His remark about the abusive and illegal ways in which the transfer was made remained just a fleeting and insignificant issue in the entire debate; the camps were divided on the lines of pro and against the investment.

The other telling event which brought forward the official stand on this investment is occasioned by the reactions and counter-reactions to the "Bochum affair". Both German and Romanian media became outlets for a war of statements which revolved around guilt, responsibility, fairness, winners and losers, in which

the European Commission was constantly invoked as a referee. While German and Romanian politicians were exchanging bitter remarks, Nokia remained rather silent and neutral.

The revolt of the German officials in North Rhine-Westphalia and those of the community in Bochum manifested against Nokia but also against Romania. The main apple of discord was the source of funds for the construction of the industrial park and Nokia Village in Cluj. Suspecting that these came from the EU and considering the lack of fairness of the company, the president of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, Martin Schultz, asked the EU to put a stop to the investment. The response came from a Romanian MEP who argued that "jobs should be secured through competitivity, not through protectionism and political statements". He continued saying that he would like to remind Mr. Schultz that "Nokia is a private enterprise and, like any other economic agent, it has the freedom to set up its own commercial strategy" (*Făclia*, Jan. 19th 2008). The intervention of José Manuel Durão Barroso made explicit that the Commission proposed the Globalization Adjustment Fund[8] to be used when the workforce is affected due to relocations outside EU. Since this is not the case with Nokia and Romania the German representative should stay reassured that no EU money was used. Later on it appeared that the Globalization Adjustment Fund was used to direct 5.5 million Euros to Germany in order to help the 1300 newly unemployed in Bochum find other jobs, by financing the re-professionalization of workers or guaranteeing means of subsistence.

During the inauguration of construction works in Tetarom III several German journalists asked the president of the County Council Marius Nicoară about the financial resources for this venture. He stated that "this investment is not made against someone, but for the purpose of creating jobs and revenues for Cluj", adding that nobody knew anything about the closing of another factory when the negotiations with Nokia were held. On a different 'line of attack', the Christian-Democrat prime minister of North Rhine-Westphalia said that "unlike the workers in the Ruhr region, those in Romania do not come in the morning at 7 and stay until the end of the shift, but come and go whenever they want". The reply came from a Nokia trade union leader in Cluj who declared that "these are the statements of a man who feels offended and who cannot adapt to the rules of the market economy". (*Ziua de Cluj*, Sept. 6th 2009). The unvarying reply in this scandal which came from Nokia to explain its decision of translocation was the

[8] The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) exists to support workers who lose their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns so that they can find another job. When a large enterprise shuts down or a factory is relocated to a country outside the EU, or a whole sector loses many jobs in a region, the EGF can help the redundant workers to find new jobs as quickly as possible. A maximum amount of € 500 million per year is available to the EGF to finance such interventions.
http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=326&langId=en

considerable difference in productions costs, mainly due to the work force expenditure. Although the German officials offered to negotiate a new, more profitable production plan, the corporation said that their decision is final and that they will only discuss the social plan which entails compensations for the Bochum workers.

The problems brought about by this translocation in Germany and inside the European Commission did not go unnoticed in Romania and from the start there were questions raised about the intentions of the company. The first newspaper interview with the CEO at the time referred to this issue as one of the important concerns for the Romanian public; the reassurance came quickly: "Nokia will be here for a long time", statement which became the title of that article (*Ziua de Cluj*, Feb. 10th 2008). In the absence of a legally binding understanding between the local administration and the corporation, his word was taken for granted and the discussion moved on to the advantages which lie ahead.

Conclusions

I argue that the reshuffling of scales which describes the current phase of globalization is triggered not merely by the workings of the rationality of capital accumulation. Not only that the meta power relations have shifted to the global and local levels, but the ways these transformations unfold require a close look at the local configurations. There are multiple perspectives that are not so often taken into account – supranational regulating agencies and their impact as important actors at national levels, the role of territorialization and the factors influencing the shifting of scales, the position of states in the core-periphery system, and the agency of local actors be they institutions or individuals, along or against the structure.

Furthermore, territorialization and rescaling cannot be seen simply as local results of power struggles between macro institutions in a more or less monolithic system. In other words, whereas the territorial alterations occasioned by the arrival of Nokia could be approached as a primary manifestation of the capitalist accumulation strategies, these are not simply the inexorable effect of the rationality of capital, they are also to a large extent influencing and influenced by the ways in which local actors imagine, understand and act upon these processes. In addition, the meaning of scale as a concept should contain more than the political and territorial dimensions once the agentive, not-solely-material element is introduced. The sterility of inquiring these phenomena through the lenses of legislation, policies, rationality of capital, and economic interests leads to a systemic view which is far from complete or satisfactory when the local imaginaries and the small scale power articulations of a given context are left aside.

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